



AMAA's 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting Banquet Honors AMA-Australia, AMA-Canada, and Hope for Armenia of France (Pages 4-6)



**SINCE 1918** 

ARMENIAN MISSIONARY **ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA** 

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Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO

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## **Empowering AMAA's Global Mission**

#### By Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO

After an absence of five years, the AMAA Annual Meeting and Banquet returned to New Jersey bringing back its gracious mission partners from all around the world.

Tonight, a graceful Banquet Committee, diligently chaired by Vahram and Lucienne Aynilian, delightfully entertained us. We honored our global partners and were touched by their amazing stories shared in live and moving pictures.

Thank you, Vahram and Lucienne and Banquet Committee, for your faith, love, and service in producing this lovely and remarkable evening.

Thank you all, for your presence tonight, a testament of support and an acknowledgment of a mission in action.

We salute the Armenian Presbyterian Church and its indefatigable minister Rev. Joseph Garabedian, the church staff and cohorts who warmly welcomed and hosted us at the Annual Meeting and will do so again at installation Worship service on Sunday.

I salute and thank the AMAA staff in Paramus, Glendale, Yerevan, and Artsakh who graciously stand behind the effort to advance every AMAA event, activity, service, or program. They are always at task producing the treasures that depict the mission we believe in and carry on.

I salute and thank our esteemed guests, who travelled long distances to bring us the warm, colorful, and boundless spirit of love, care, and attention in support of the mission and its goals.

May God abundantly bless you all.

We are living in difficult times.

Despite the glowing illumination that emanates from our collective passion to serve the Homeland and our communities across the globe, we realize we are living in difficult times.

Never in the past 35 years has the prospect of a free and independent Artsakh been so dim and remote.

Never in the history of the living generation of Armenians has the concern about the Homeland been so great and serious.

Threats, assault, land grab, occupation, execution of unarmed POWs, incitement, and promotion of hatred, have all gone through with impunity. Armenia has only received toothless condemnation from friends near and far.

In this existential battle of survival, we are the sole guarantors of our destiny.

But my outlook is positive. We have endured such periods in history, borne the pain and resurrected. Our resilience and persistence have prevailed. We must be vigilant, active, alert, and productive.

Our Homeland is our yoke, and we should all be engaged in a battle to defend, support, and sustain it.

We each have our own weaponry and should use what we are good at.

Despite aggression, political turmoil, economic crisis, and destabilizing sanctions all around, AMAA steadfastly continues to spread God's Word and reflect His love, goodness, and hope around.

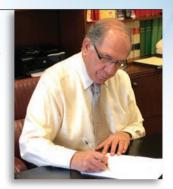
AMAA's presence on the stage of Armenian philanthropy is respectable, necessary, and impactful. Whether in the border villages of Artsakh or Syunik, any corner in Armenia, any country in the Near East including Turkey, most of Europe, in North or South America, AMAA, faithful to its mission, is present and impactful.

In the next few months, we shall build two new Kindergartens in Artsakh, half a dozen new homes, and a Tech Center at the Avedisian School in Yerevan. We shall embark on a major development of the youth camp in Hankavan, pour the foundation of the resurrected Camp Armen in Tuzla, Turkey, and inaugurate the new AMAA Center and soup kitchen in Bert, Tavush Marz.

We are good at building, educating, and spreading the Word. Those are our weapons. We are good at using them and we shall use them.

God has called on the AMAA to face the spiritual and humanitarian challenges of our people and assume a humble role of service. As we look up to the Great Commission, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" Mark 16:15, the march goes on. Thank you for sharing this evening with us.

Thank you for your support and May God bless you all.



October 22, 2022, Paramus, NJ



## AMAA 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting Banquet

## Celebrated in Grand Style

By Florence Avakian

eaching a century of growth and great achievement is considered a climactic milestone, but exceeding the 100 degree mark is a remarkable triumph. On Saturday evening, October 22, the Armenian Missionary Association of America held its 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting Banquet with close to 225 guests from all over the world in attendance.

At this auspicious event, entitled "Empowering AMAA's Global Mission," this organization which serves as the missionary arm of the Armenian Evangelical Church internationally, and is thriving in 24 countries, honored its partners in three countries - Canada, Australia, and France.

Representing the association's fellowship which promotes education, churches, humanitarian and youth programs, and camps for Armenians worldwide, the banquet tables were symbolically decorated with globes sitting atop an ornamental dish of fall flowers. A warm welcome was shared by longtime AMAA officials and activists Vahram and Lucienne Aynilian in English, Armenian, and French. "We stand on the shoulders of our courageous people and heroic history," they said to loud applause.

Rev. Joseph Garabedian, dedicated Pastor of the Armenian Presbyterian Church in Paramus, NJ, where the 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting had taken place during the weekend, voiced a stirring invocation, after which award-winning singer and actress Ani Djirdjirian sang the American and Armenian national anthems acapella, with many in the audience joining in.

Relaying a message from AMAA President, Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO, reminded the audience that "our last meeting was five years ago due to the pandemic and other difficulties that beset the AMAA, Armenia, Artsakh, Lebanon, and Syria during this period. In the interim, the AMAA

has helped our fallen and disabled soldiers with spiritual and humanitarian assistance as we did to aid the suffering during and after the 1988 earthquake with its many victims, including the orphans," he said with emphasis.

The AMAA will always "help and rebuild. If we stand united, we will always succeed," Mr. Khanjian stated forcefully to sustained applause.

Among the special guests in the audience were the Vicar of the Armenian Prelacy (eastern) the Very Rev. Fr. Sahag Yemishian, Tufenkjian Foundation Representative Dr. Antranig Kasparian, Armenian's Ambassador to the United Nations Mher Margaryan, and Armenia's Ambassador to the United States Lilit Makunts who, in a brief address, spoke of the exemplary role of the AMAA in Armenia, as well as Armenia's progress in the last four years.

Also present were Armenian activists Hagop and Eranica Kouyoumdjian,



Tekeyan Cultural Association official Hagop Vartivarian, AAHPO President Dr. and Mrs. Lawrence Najarian, with members Shoghag Hovanessian, and Seta Nalbandian, Armenian Radio Hour of NJ Director Vartan and Adrine Abdo with members Seta, Aren, and Diran Jebejian, the latter who photographed the event.

Following a sumptuous dinner, the representatives of the Canadian, Australian, and French AMAA partners took center stage, detailing the growth and virtues of their organizations, with lengthy videos and leaders speaking of their vibrant activities.

#### **AMA CANADA**

Mihran Jizmejian, AMAC former President/CEO and current Chair in Canada, spoke of the birth of the Armenian Missionary Association of Canada in 1984 with a group of dedicated founders including Reverends Abraham Jizmejian, Ardashes Kerbabian, Hovhannes Agnerian, Yessayi Sarmazian, Jirair Bezdikian, Alice Marandiian, Sonia Matossian, Dr. George Ajemian, Messer Anton Torunian, Karekian Sagherian, Papken Tountaian.

Hagop Basmadjian, Souren Hadjian Sarkis Hanenian, Mihran Jizmejian, Antibas Lousararian, Puzant Danaian, and Hagop Kaakahjian.

Four Armenian Evangelical churches were established in Canada - Toronto. Cambridge, and two in Montreal, following lengthy discussions with AMAA's Executive Director Rev. Guiragos Chopourian, and Rev. Dr. Movses B. Janbazian in 1982. Mihran Jizmejian with his wife Vartouhi served 40 stellar years including Chair, President, and Executive Director.

Continuing AMAC projects include Child Sponsorship in Armenia, Artsakh, and Lebanon, relief programs in Artsakh, Lebanon, the Armenian Evangelical School in Anjar, Lebanon, in Askeran, Artsakh and the Vanadzor Shogh Center in Armenia.



Joseph and Joyce Stein, AMAA Board and Committee members, paid tribute to Rev. Krikor Youmshajekian, AMA Australia



Banquet Co-Chairs Vahram and Lucienne Aynilian.



Armenia's Ambassador to US Lilit Makunts.

President/CEO, and spoke of their first meeting with Rev. Krikor in the 1970s on their annual visits to Lebanon and Syria at the urging of Joyce's father Stephen Philibosian "who wanted us to see the many projects he supported for many years."

In their appreciative remarks, Joseph and Joyce (Philibosian) Stein continued, "we are here tonight to honor Rev. Krikor



L to R: Vartouhi & Mihran Jizmejian and Zaven Khanjian.



Lto R: Datevig & Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian, Joyce Stein, Gary Phillips and Joe Stein.

and Datevig for their years of bringing the Australian Armenian population into the limelight with the founding and growth of the Uniting Church and to thank them for their Christian leadership."

Created in 2001 through the long-time efforts of the late Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, the first inductees included Hovhannes Soghomonian, Barkev Ish-khanian, Sevag Chelebian, Lucy Aroyan, Lena Bomoushakian, Arpi Giragossian, and Rev. Dr. Krikor Youmshajekian as President/CEO.

The Australian chapter's projects include student support programs in Armenia, Artsakh and Lebanon, emergency support and refurbishment of schools in Syria, Lebanon, Armenia, and Artsakh, Shogh Centers in Armenia and Artsakh, summer camps, humanitarian and medical needs, scholarship assistance and spiritual literature, and underground shelters for natural disasters in Australia.

#### **HOPE FOR ARMENIA - FRANCE**

Harout Nercessian, former AMAA Armenia Representative, and Hope for Armenia President Serge Kurkdjian whose remarks in French were translated, recounted that the Armenian Evangelical churches in France established Hope for Armenia at the initiation of its President, the late Rev. Daniel Sahagian to provide material and spiritual help to the Armenian earthquake victims in 1988.

The first President was Rev. Dr. René Léonian, followed by Boros Haladjian, Rev. Gilbert Léonian, and the current President Serge Kurkdjian. The group has been instrumental in providing economic aid to Armenia with food, fuel, and spiritual guidance during those dark times.

Mr. Kurkdjian provided a 26-year collaboration with the leadership of Hope for Armenia, tirelessly organizing trips to Armenia and meticulously organizing many

creative projects, including camps for the children and domiciles for the elderly.

Injecting light humor in a joyous evening, the culinary expertise of the French cuisine was emphasized. "We the people of France love to eat, and we Armenians introduced them to our own food of course, with wine, showing our love of God, and our creative menus."

Hope For Armenia's latest program with the AMAA involves the opening of an Education Day Center for children in Stepanakert, Artsakh. The Center in AMAA-provided premises will open in September 2023, with the teaching of Christian education and the French language.

Lovely art gifts from the AMAA were presented to the representatives of the Canadian, Australian, and French partners made by Vasken Brutyan from Armenia. Each piece of artwork, different in composition, utilizes fragments from manuscripts of the Gandzasar School, from architectural and crosstown motifs, as well as passages from the prayers of St. Gregory of Narek.

The Hope for Armenia French representatives also presented the AMAA Executive Director/CEO a beautifully framed Hayr Mer written by the orphans of Armenia.

#### INSPIRING REMARKS ON CURRENT EMERGENCY IN ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH

AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian in his inspiring remarks, remembered and expressed appreciation for all the individuals who made the evening possible, including the AMAA staff in Paramus, Glendale, Yerevan, and Artsakh, as well as the many guests who came from many corners of the world "to bring us the warm, colorful and boundless spirit of love, care, and attention in support of our mission and goals."

Noting the current difficult times, he emotionally stated, "never in the past 35

years has the prospect of a free and independent Artsakh been so dim and remote. Never in the history of the living generation of Armenians has the concern about the Homeland been so great and serious."

He recounted the "threats, assault, land grab, occupation, execution of unarmed POWs, incitement and promotion of hatred which have all gone through with impunity. Armenia has only received toothless condemnation from friends

near and far. In this existential battle of survival, we are the sole guarantors of our destiny," he stressed.

Expressing hope, he reminded all that "we have endured such periods in history. Borne the pain and resurrected. Our resilience and persistence have prevailed. Our Homeland is our yoke, and we should all be engaged in a battle to defend, support, and sustain it."

### FUTURE PROJECTS IN ARMENIA AND ARTSAKH

Mr. Khanjian informed the audience that in the next few months "we will build two new kindergartens in Artsakh, half a dozen new homes, and a tech center at the Avedisian School in Yerevan. We shall embark on a major development of the youth camp in Hankavan, pour the foundation of the resurrected Camp Armen in Tuzla, Turkey, and inaugurate the new AMAA Center and soup kitchen in Bert, Tavush Marz."

He again stated strongly, "we are good in building, educating, and spreading the Word. Those are our weapons. We shall use them," he declared to a standing ovation.

Among the acclaimed performers at the event were noted violinist from Armenia, Diana Vasilyan who performed during the reception preceding the banquet, awardwinning Armenian-American singer, actress and TV performer Ani Djirdjirian who had the crowd jumping during several of her stage performances, and the nimble footed, beautifully costumed dancers of the Shushi Dance Ensemble under the direction of Artistic Director and Choreographer Seta Paskalian-Kantardjian.

The momentous occasion closed with a devotional closing prayer and Benediction by Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, Acting President of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East and President of Haigazian University in Beirut, Lebanon.

The AMAA 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual Banquet Committee members included, Co-Chairs, Vahram and Lucienne Aynilian, Raffi and Lorri Aynilian, VJ and Simonè Aynilian, Hrag and Taline Chalian, Ida Gueyikian, Shant and Nary Gueyikian, Berjouhy Barsoumian Gulesserian, Nurhan and Celeste Helvacian, Vicki Shoghag Hovanessian, Zaven and Sona Khanjian, Gregory and Tamara Krikorian, Christine Kutlu, Seta Nalbandian, Magda Poulos, Nancy Rivera, Jennifer Telfeyan-LaRoe, Marie Viducich, and Kathy Voskian.

The AMAA would like to thank all involved in making this  $103^{rd}$  Annual Meeting Banquet a grand success!



L to R: Harout Nercessian, Serge & Nadia Kurkdjian and Zaven Khanjian.

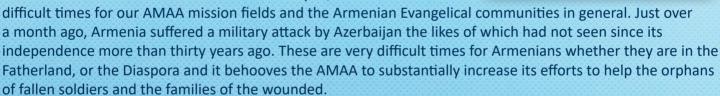


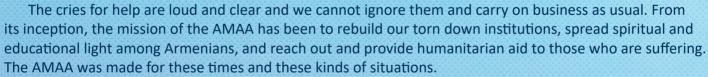
# AMAA President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian's Welcome Remarks at AMAA's 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting Banquet

t is true that the AMAA was born in Worcester, Massachusetts more than a hundred years ago, but as far as I can remember, and I'm no spring chicken, Paramus, New Jersey has been the home of the AMAA for a good many years now. In that sense, New Jersey is a second home for me and for all of us who are near and dear to the AMAA. It certainly feels good to be home and I want to take this opportunity to thank the local Armenian Evangelical community not only for hosting the meetings and activities this year but also for providing a home and supporting the AMAA headquarters for many years.

Our last Annual Meeting Banquet in New Jersey was five years ago, and we can all appreciate how much the world has changed in those five years.

From the COVID pandemic to the 44-day war in and around Artsakh and the economic meltdown in Lebanon and Syria, these have been





Many of you who are here tonight remember very well the earthquake of 1988 that hit Armenia. In fact, some of you were actively involved in the relief efforts that the AMAA started through the establishment of the Orphan and Child Care Committee which remains active to this day in Boston, New Jersey, and Los Angeles. Now, I truly hope that we never again see anything close to the death and destruction we saw in 1988, but I know that whatever happens in Armenia the AMAA will act swiftly and do its utmost to support the needy, ease the pain of the wounded and sick, and rebuild whatever is torn down. The AMAA will not sit idle.

At times like this it is vital for Armenians of all affiliations and persuasions to come together and support each other in the Fatherland and the Diaspora and, if we stand united as one nation, I have no doubt that we will prevail.

Tonight, we are here to celebrate and thank God for the AMAA, for completing another successful year of spreading the light of the Gospel, educating the youth, and lending support to our mission fields in 24 countries where the AMAA serves.

My thanks go to the AMAA staff and volunteer committee members under the leadership of our Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian for working out all the details necessary to make this weekend a success. My special thanks to the Co-Chairs Vahram and Lucienne Aynilian for organizing tonight's program as well as their dedication and support that made this event so special. My thanks also to all the sponsors and all of you present here for participating in this event tonight.

I wish you all an enjoyable evening.





## AMAA Holds 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting in Paramus, NJ

#### New Board Members Elected for Class of 2025

**Bv** Louisa Janbazian

fter an absence of five years, the Armenian Missionary Association of America's (AMAA) Annual Meeting and Banquet returned to Paramus, New Jersey where its main head-quarters are located at 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ. The AMAA's 103<sup>rd</sup> Annual Meeting was held on Saturday, October 22, 2022, in the Sanctuary of the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ

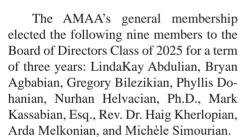
In the absence of AMAA President Nazareth Darakjian, M.D. due to an emergency, the meeting was presided over by the Association's Vice President Gary Phillips, Esq. Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepyan, Senior Pastor of Evangelical Church of Armenia in the Motherland, offered a prayer and a short devotion.

His devotional was based on Isaiah 40:1-3. Rev. Hovsepyan focused on the situation today faced by the Armenian people and said: "In times of uncertainty, loss, economic crisis, when things happen out of our control, in times of war, instability, when powerful countries keep silent or interfere only for their benefit, when it seems there is no hope and no one is going to help, when it seems this is the end, God speaks to His people through His faithful prophet and reminds us of the Good News." And he challenged all, "in these times of uncertainty, in these times of wilderness of

unknown future, to be the voice that speaks tenderly to the ones who are lost; cry loudly and proclaim the Good News, the Gospel to those, who are suffering and prepare the way of the Lord in the wilderness of our time."

During the meeting, AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian presented his report covering the Association's activities during the 2021-2022 Fiscal Year. Reports were also received from the AMAA Officers, Directors and Committee Chairs, as well as Representatives of the Armenian Evangelical Unions, the Armenian Evangelical World Council, and affiliated organizations, who shared their joys and concerns and praised God for another successful year post COVID pandemic era.





The AMAA's 103rd Annual Meeting concluded with a closing prayer offered by Rev. Joël Mikaélian, President of the Armenian Evangelical World Council and Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Issy-les-Moulineaux, France.

In conjunction with the AMAA Annual Meeting, the AMAA Board of Directors and the Armenian Evangelical World Council held their meetings on October 20-21.

On Sunday, October 23, members and guests joined the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ for a special Worship Service. Mihran Jizmejian offered the Armenian sermon and Rev. Dr. Haig Kherlopian offered the English sermon. A special prayer was offered by Rev. Harut Khachatryan, Senior Pastor of the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, in memory of AMAA members and friends who made the transition from this life-to-Life Eternal during the past year. Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Executive Director of the Armenian Evangelical



AMAA Board of Directors meeting.



Installation of members and officers of AMAA Board of Directors.



AMAA 103rd Annual Meeting Worship Service at the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ.

World Council, officiated the installation of the members and officers of the AMAA Board of Directors.

"We take this opportunity to thank the members of the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus and its Pastor Rev. Joseph Garabedian for hosting the Annual Meeting and welcoming us with great warmth and hospitality. We pray that God will continue to bless this congregation and their ministry abundantly in the Bergen County area of New Jersey," said Mr. Khanjian.



## Espoir pour l'Arménie Brings Hope to Armenia Since 1989



Rev. Dr. René Léonian with one of the 50 KG flour bags which were shipped from France to Armenia in the early 1990s as humanitarian aid.

By Rev. René Léonian, Ph.D., Founding President of Hope for Armenia

n December 7, 1988, the earthquake in Armenia took place. Across the world, Armenians quickly organized themselves to come to the aid of their brothers and sisters in Armenia. The next day, December 8, 1988, the Armenian community of France created a special organization in Paris, SOS-Armenia, under the presidency of the three Armenian churches. President of the organization was the Bishop of the Armenian Apostolic Church, and the two Vice Presidents were the Bishop of the Armenian Catholic Church and me representing the Armenian Evangelical Church.

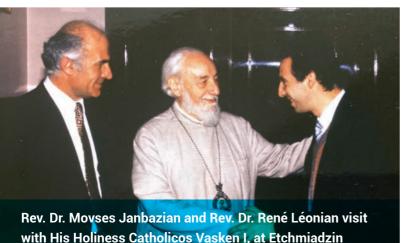
In collaboration with the USSR Embassy in France, cargo planes immediately left for Armenia, via a stopover in Moscow. Late in December 1988, my wife Sylvie and I flew to Armenia on one of those cargo planes and stayed for two weeks. We went to the most remote villages in the region of Gyumri and Spitak and helped

local teams distribute the relief items we brought. We held several meetings with government authorities and religious leaders as well as with members of civil society. At the request of Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, Executive Director of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), upon my return to Paris I wrote a detailed report of the situation and the needs in Armenia. The AMAA immediately distributed this report to its network of members and supporters. I was the first Armenian evangelical leader to go to Armenia after the earthquake. At the time, Armenia was facing a difficult situation due to the recent Artsakh conflict. AMAA was already very committed to help the people of Armenia.

Back in France, I was invited for several months by Armenian and non-Armenian circles to speak and raise awareness of the needs of Armenians following this earthquake. I illustrated my presentations with slides which stirred a lot of emotion among the audience. I

also gave numerous interviews to the French and Armenian media.

The pastors and parishioners of the Armenian Evangelical churches in France were very much aware of the plight of our people in Armenia. In April 1989, a worldwide Armenian Evangelical delegation visited Armenia headed by Rev. Janbazian and Rev. Daniel Sahagian, President of the Armenian Evangelical World Council and of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of France. Upon his return to France, Rev. Sahagian was convinced that action was needed in the humanitarian and spiritual fields. While continuing our participation in the programs organized by SOS-Armenia, he proposed the creation of a special organization within the Armenian Evangelical churches of France. In May 1989, upon the initiative of Rev. Sahagian, the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of France created "Espoir pour l'Arménie" (Hope for Armenia) to help victims of the earthquake both materially and spiritually. I was ap-



Cathedral soon after the 1988 earthquake in Armenia.







pointed the first President of Hope for Armenia. The Presidents of the organization who followed me were Boros Haladjian, Rev. Gilbert Léonian, Serge Kurkdjian, and David Chahinian, who was just recently elected.

Since the establishment of Hope for Armenia in 1989, an official and fraternal collaboration was also established between Hope for Armenia and the AMAA, and all the actions of the organization have been carried out in consultation and collaboration with the AMAA. Joint visits were also organized in Armenia to assess needs and take stock of past actions.

In 1992, with the collaboration of SEL (Mutuel Aid and Liaison Service), Hope for Armenia started the Sponsorship Program in Armenia.

Compared to the AMAA, Hope for Armenia has less financial means. However, the advantage of being geographically closer to Armenia, a large number of people are motivated to go regularly to Armenia.

During the first years, Hope for Armenia responded to emergency needs by sending trucks or containers with food, clothing and Bibles. Soon after, summer camps were organized. Subsequently, there was a diversification of aid such as medical, educational, cultural as well as development programs.

In 1991, when AMAA was officially registered in Armenia, the first AMAA Center, located on Nigol Duman Street, was jointly purchased by AMAA and Hope for Armenia.

In 1994, the Armenian Evangelical World Council appointed me to move to Armenia and work with the local Armenian Evangelical Churches. Shortly after, I was also asked to be the representative of AMAA and Hope for Armenia in the Homeland which I continued until 2011.

Looking back, we realize how faithful God has been. We had a strong vision, clear objectives, human potential, and financial means. All this, thanks to the presence and love of God, the generosity of donors and the dedication of members of the Board of Directors.



Distribution of Children's Bibles in Armenia in the early 1990s, coordinated by the AMAA and Hope for Armenia.









Humanitarian aid and Bible shipments from France to Armenia organized by Hope for Armenia soon after the 1988 earthquake.



## Espoir pour l'Arménie's Ministry to the Elderly in Armenia



Boros Haladjian delivers morning devotional at one of the Stepanavan Camps for the elderly.

By Boros Haladjian, Former President of Hope for Armenia

e cannot talk about the ministry of Hope for Armenia (*Espoir pour l'Arménie*) for the elderly without paying tribute to the late Rev. Araik Ochinyan and his wife Valia who died tragically. The Pastor and his wife were stationed in Stepanavan, Armenia.

Rev. Araik had the vision to help the elderly not only those of the Church but also of the city. Rev. René Léonian, AMAA Representative in Armenia at the time, transmitted to Hope for Armenia this beautiful initiative of a Soup Kitchen.

Why and how to help the elderly in Armenia?

After the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, independence, and the war of 1991-1994, families split up in order to live or survive.

Due to a lack of work in Stepanavan, the adult children left with their families to work in the capital Yerevan or Russia or elsewhere, leaving their elderly parents alone. Minor children who remained with their grandparents were often helped by sponsorship.

The retired people left alone and who had worked all their lives under the Soviet regime received a miserable pension, which was not enough for them to live without the Soup Kitchen ministry.

The Soup Kitchen in Stepanavan has been operating for more than 20 years. Over the years, it operated in different locations, often in rented rooms in schools and finally arrived in the newly constructed site of the Church. The first floor of the Center is dedicated for the Soup Kitchen with adequate heating for the 6 months of winter

(November-April). Thanks to the AMAA for this great achievement, about forty people come for 5 or 6 times a week for a full meal at noon, starting with a hot stew dish, topped with dessert, cheese and tea. Three qualified and paid people serve everyone with love, without forgetting the prayer before the meal to give thanks to God. During the winters of 2020 and 2021, the Soup Kitchen activity continued in temporary quarters in precarious conditions and despite COVID until they moved to the new location.

A comfortable walk-in shower was also installed to allow some elderly people who did not have hot water at home a place to bathe.

Thanks to the successive pastors after Rev. Araik, Pastors Sargis, Garen, Khatchik and Hrand and all the staff and volunteers who











Boros Haladjian with Arman Martirosyan, Pastor of Sisian Church on left.

have made it possible to carry out this Soup Kitchen mission continuously and for so long.

After having served the children in the day camps and summer camps since 1990 (especially with Rev. Gilbert Léonian), my wife Maryse and I had the idea of creating summer camps for the elderly who frequent the Soup Kitchen in the winter. For more than 10 years, every week we have welcomed them to the Church for a recreation time from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

#### The Program includes:

- Welcome coffee
- Praise and Worship led by the young people followed by Bible sharing in the Church and then in small groups where everyone participates and asks questions.
- A hot meal without forgetting the "khorovadz" (barbeque) on the last day
- Games, entertainment, theatre, dance, board games, and crafts.
- Friendship and attention of the entire entertainment team.

Every year we eagerly await to serve each other with joy. To see people smile (children and adults) in Armenia, is our



greatest joy. This Program was interrupted in Stepanavan for two years due to the construction of the new Center.

The Church of Sisian, renovated by Hope for Armenia, welcomed this new ministry with the elderly. For three years it has offered the same program for around forty people with the same enthusiasm.

Thank you to Pastors Hrand of Stepanavan and Arman of Sisian and their wives



and teams for their collaboration and for the Word of God that is sown.

We return enriched from our mission in Armenia with the elderly. We thank God for the opportunity of serving Him in Armenia.

Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God. I am the LORD. Leviticus 19:32







## Espoir pour l'Arménie A Pioneer in the Field of Camping Ministry in Armenia



Rev. Gilbert Léonian with his wife Léa in Armenia.

By Rev. Gilbert Léonian, Former President of Hope for Armenia

n the year following the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, leaders of Hope for Armenia (*Espoir pour l'Arménie*) welcomed 10 children from Gyumri to their two holiday centers at Fontanelle and LA Source for two months.

Then in 1990, during the atheistic Soviet era, we had a vision to organize the first Christian summer camp in Armenia for 150 children in the "Parvana" campsite in the mountains of Dzaghgadzor.

As soon as the AMAA Executive Director at the time, the late Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, learned of this project, he was so encouraged by this courageous initiative, that he offered all the spiritual and financial support of AMAA to allow the realization of this Christian educational project for children who had just suffered the drama of the 1988 Armenia Earthquake.

This was our first Hope for Armenia-

AMAA collaboration, serving the spiritual, educational, social, and humanitarian wellbeing of the children of Armenia.

It was a mixed team of 12 Armenians from France and four Armenians from the United States that laid the foundation of this beautiful mission. The setting was beautiful, but the living conditions were precarious. This first experience opened the door to our ministry for children. What a joy it was to live every day with these children who were thirsty to live better days.

Our team members from France led by Boros Haladjian and me, as well as the team from the United States led by Rev. Daniel Albarian experienced unique moments of sharing, communion, and friendship with these children.

For my part, the moments of morning prayers with our teams, followed by biblical teachings to children and adults, remain etched in my memory forever. What a privilege it was to make known the love of God and free salvation in Jesus Christ to those hearts who discovered the message of the Word of God. To this day we are living the blessed fruits of this first evangelization.

Armen, one of the teenagers to whom I gave a New Testament in Armenian, said to me that "it is the most beautiful gift I have ever received." He became for my wife Léa and me our first godson from Armenia. We accompanied him in his life for many years to study at university. And I had the joy of baptizing him after he gave his life to Jesus Christ.

1994 was the start of the first day camps – Vacation Bible School (VBS) in Spitak: the epicenter of the 1988 earthquake, which continues to this day in 2022. Since then, Spitak has become my favorite city. Spitak was completely destroyed during the earthquake. Out of a population of 20,000,



Parvana Camp 1990 - First Camp held in Armenia with the collaboration of Hope for Armenia and AMAA.



Summer Camp in Spitak - 1996.

5,000 perished. The survivors needed to rebuild their city, rebuild their lives, and find new hope.

It was under these conditions that in the summer of 1994 we started our first activities with the children with the help of the AMAA Representative in Armenia. We had two five-day day camp sessions (VBS) and welcomed 100 children at each session.

The conditions were very precarious: we lived in *domigs* (shacks) of the No. 2 School which was destroyed and had no water or electricity. But the atmosphere was full of joy, enthusiasm, and dynamism. We brought these children and their teachers the message of peace, love, and hope.

Gradually we expanded our mission for the children of Ijevan, Stepanakert (Gargar camp), Shushi, Sisian, and Shiragamut.

During the month of August 2022, with 12 volunteers from France, we collaborated with our local pastors and their teams to participate in day camps in Spitak and Shiragamut.

#### We had five goals:

- Sports activities in the gymnasium of the Daniel Sahagian School
- French lessons in our Franco-Armenian cultural center
- Medical care for children in our clinic
- Summer day camps in Spitak and Shiragamut
- Spiritual support for the two local churches: worship and visits to families affected by the 44-day war.

The children's program included sporting activities, Bible teachings with flannel

graphs and teaching of Christian songs.

Today, 30 years later, we thank God for the great progress that our sister Union of the Evangelical Church of Armenia and its members have made in the field of Christian education, summer camps, Camp Shoghig in Hankavan, and the fine organization and experience of Sunday schools in each local Church.

Hope for Armenia has been a pioneer in this field. Today, we rejoice in the great progress made and the extent of this valuable work with children, adolescents, and young people.

Currently during the collaboration of our summer visits, our role is more a mission of comple-

mentary support and fraternal encouragement in the areas where we can make ourselves useful. We always return enriched by our collaborations with the staff of the local churches and with the leaders of the AMAA and by making themselves useful to serve God with a renewed love for the Armenian people and specially for the children.



Hope for Armenia volunteers for 2022 Camp season in Armenia.



Most of this year's team want to return next year. Many of them, young and adults, are motivated to learn the Armenian language during the coming year.

Children are the future of our people. We pray God will bring to fruition these seeds of life that are planted in these young hearts.







## Espoir pour l'Arménie Provides Assistance in Armenia and Artsakh



Serge Kurkdjian with his wife Nadia in Armenia.

By Serge Kurkdjian, Immediate Past President of Hope for Armenia

ope for Armenia (Espoir pour l'Arménie) was founded in 1989 to provide humanitarian and spiritual assistance to the Armenian people living in Armenia and Artsakh. Its main partner in Armenia is the Armenian Missionary Association of America.

In 1992 I was invited to join the Hope For Armenia Board by Rev. Dr. René Léonian and was entrusted with the position of Secretary. As Secretary, I had the opportunity to work with several team members including different Presidents – Rev. Dr. René Léonian, Boros Haladjian and Rev. Gilbert Léonian, with whom we organized everything to keep the Association running smoothly. Later, on June 20, 2000, I was elected President of Hope for Armenia at the General Assembly in Issy les Moulineaux.

Today, Hope for Armenia is recognized and appreciated in Armenia, France, and other countries, thanks to the members of the Board and the Presidents who were able to give the organization the right direction at the right time.

Hope for Armenia offers the following programs:

#### **Mental Health**

Sylvia Topouzkhanian, a speech therapist working in Lyon at the Vinatier Psychiatric Hospital, has trained a team of several caregivers in Armenia to accompany and stimulate mentally deficient children and adults.

#### **Soup Kitchen**

The Soup Kitchen in Stépanavan has been operating since the winter of 2001. A hot meal is served daily at noon, from November to May. More than 60 seniors regularly come to find a balanced and warm meal, as well as comfort in this program.

#### **Adult Day Camp**

Maryse and Boros Haladjian run a day center for the elderly in Stépanavan and Sisian which includes songs, games, crafts, Bible readings and a hot meal and a snack served each day.

#### **Medical Action in Spitak**

Medical action has refocused on the Spitak Pediatric and Dental Medical Practice (program in collaboration with the UMAF – Armenian Medical Union of France).

## Christmas for Armenian Children

A container loaded in Marseille is transported every year to Armenia. The container is stuffed with shoes, new clothes, soap, paramedical equipment, school and educational materials, literature, games, and toys. Distribution is done by a team of French volunteers. An envelope of 35 euros is also given to each sponsored child.

## Newsletters and Communication

Two newsletters are sent each year to Hope for Armenia donors and supporters. This year's theme of the Spring Letter was "Hope Against All Hope" (Romans 4:8), and the Autumn Letter was "Let Us Give Life to Artsakh." There is also a website





and a Facebook page to communicate with supporters.

#### **Arts and Crafts**

Handicrafts are purchased in Armenia from Armenian craftsmen and artists to be exhibited and sold in France to benefit Hope for Armenia. These exhibitions took place in different regions, in churches, town halls and markets. This program is part of the promotion and revival of handicrafts and manual labor in Armenia.

#### **Humanitarian Trip**

Every year a tourist and humanitarian trip is organized for supporters of Hope for Armenia. The trip includes visits to Armenia cultural sites, and especially the presentation of the various humanitarian and spiritual actions of the association.

#### **Spitak School Number 2**

In 1999, Hope for Armenia built the Daniel Sahagian School with the collaboration of the Armenian Fund of France.

#### **Spitak Gymnasium**

For the 20th anniversary, the Hope for Armenia association offered a magnificent gymnasium to the 500 students of the Daniel Sahagian School; the inauguration took place on August 9, 2010.

#### Francophonie in Spitak

French lessons are offered throughout the year by Professor Christiné Apitsarian at the Franco-Armenian Cultural Center to a group of highly motivated children. Artistic activities complete these courses.

During the summer, the French team visited the Cultural Center and encouraged this work to promote the French language and culture.

#### **Sponsorship of Children**

Sponsorship began 30 years ago with SEL (Mutuel Aid and Liaison Service) to help families affected by the 1988 earth-quake. Hope for Armenia and AMAA have been historical partners of SEL during this time. Thanks to sponsorships, hundreds of children have been able to grow up in dignity and continue their education, some of them to higher education. After 20 years, the SEL entrusted Hope for Armenia with the entire management of the sponsored children. Since January 1, 2014, a new team has been in place: Gisele Paladjian, in charge of sponsorship, Jean-Claude Boyadjian, accountant, and Franck Garabedian, program manager.

#### The program includes:

- Direct financial assistance: contributions from sponsors
- Material aid: the container
- Access to free care: dental practices and medical clinics managed by Espoir
- Spiritual supervision: Sunday school, airy centers, support of sponsors in prayer

## Christian Literature and Spiritual Work

The magazine "Panpère," the official publication of the Union of Armenian Evangelicals of France, is sent to over a thousand Armenians, where it is highly appreciated thanks to cultural and spiritual articles. The same is true of the magazine Badanegan Artzakank, published in Beirut. The Calendar of the Christian Family, published in France, distributes more than 400 copies.

#### Sisian Cultural Center

In 2005, Hope for Armenia bought a 350 m2 building on a plot of 2050 m2 to offer to AMAA for spiritual and cultural purposes. The building is named after Pastor Hovannes Ghazarossian and Yervant Kurkdjian, the 2 main donors. In 2018, the 1st floor opened and included a large worship room, a cultural room, and many rooms for children to do their schoolwork. In 2021, there was the renovation of the 2nd floor, with an apartment intended for the pastor.

#### **Projects**

The year 2021 has been marked for **Artsakh Emergency** and **Artsakh renewal operations**. As soon as the 44-day war ended, Hope for Armenia initiated a vast fundraising campaign to provide material assistance to the victims of the war, including refugees in Armenia, displaced people from Artsakh, orphans, and sponsored children. The donations collected were sent to Ar-

menia where our partner AMAA was able to distribute food and supplies to as many people as possible for 1 year.

After the emergency, the **Artsakh Renewal** program was launched to help rebuild lives and souls with a fundraiser for 4 major programs: rehousing, health, return to work, spiritual. This program culminated in the evening of May 28, 2021, under the sponsorship of Pascal Légitimus. Many artists were present to



support an ambitious project: the opening of a Cultural Centre in Stepanakert for children, teenagers, and adults. The funds raised make it possible to set up educational, cultural, and spiritual programs. The opening is scheduled for September 2023, after the completion of the work.

#### **Our partners**

- AMAA–Armenian Missionary Association of America
- ACO-Action Chrétienne En Orient
- UMAF-Union Medicale Arménienne de France
- Various traders, industrialists, and business leaders

### The Current Board of Directors

David Chahinian, President Pastor Joël Mikaélian, Vice President Franck Garabedian, Secretary Jean-Claude Boyadjian, Treasurer, and accountant

Rev. Dr. Sam Albarian, Boros Haladjian, Jean-Baptiste Bakalian, Stéphanie Darcourt, Serge Kurkdjian, Rev. Gilbert Léonian, Rev. Dr. René Léonian, Ari Topouzkhanian and Sylvia Topouzkhanian Advisors

Gisele Paladjian, Sponsorship Officer

All the actions in Armenia are conducted in collaboration with AMAA.



The current Board members of Hope for Armenia.



## Youth at the Heart of Espoir pour l'Arménie



Franck Garabedian with a sponsored child in Armenia.

By Franck Garabedian, Secretary of Hope for Armenia

ope for Armenia (Espoir pour l'Arménie) is a humanitarian and Christian outreach, which implies that in all our programs, we must find the balance between earthly food and spiritual food. It is because we are first and foremost Christians that we are involved in Hope for Armenia, and it is on this rock that we wanted to base our actions. For thirty years, our various teams have traveled to Armenia to come to the bedside of our wounded people. We organized the first summer camps, we responded to the health emergency, we looked after children, the disabled and the elderly, we rebuilt schools and rehabilitated buildings to make them day centers and churches, we have supported and accompanied the pastors, we have modestly laid the foundations for the reconstruction of men and souls.

However, our work is not finished. Our association is apolitical, but we cannot remain insensitive to what is happening today in Armenia on the political, geopolitical, and social level. Our country is in danger, its people are

suffering, and their own freedoms are threatened. Freedom to live in peace, freedom to be sovereign, freedom to believe in one's God. The Artsakh war has cruelly reminded us how coveted and fragile our nation was.

Consequently, our vision and our actions in the coming years will be to support and help our people to save their identity as the first Christian people in history, to join forces with other sister associations such as AMAA in order to pool our ideas and our means, to be present on the ground, along-side those such as social workers, volunteers, pastors, and doctors, who work tirelessly for the well-being and salvation of Armenians.

This is why our "Artsakh Renewal" program aims to work on four major axes: rehousing, employment, medical, and spiritual. It is a question of providing a concrete response to the basic needs that too many of our compatriots lack. At the same time, we wanted to give back to the children of Shushi what they had lost during the 44-day war: a place to live, a cultural, educational, recreational, and spiritual space. This is what we have done in collaboration with the AMAA and our

donors from France in order to permanently anchor in this land of Artsakh an identity, a culture and faith in God. The opening of this center is planned very soon, and it will be called the House of Hope of Stepanakert because more than ever, Armenia needs hope and support. This program is an example of perfect collaboration and unity of vision for the benefit of children displaced from Artsakh.





French lessons offered at the Franco-Armenian Cultural Center to a group of highly motivated children.

The future of Armenia is being played out today, with young people being at the heart of all our attention. Let's give our youth the chance to live and grow in this thousand-year-old land, let's give them hope for a harmonious and happy life, let's give them access to education, health, and employment, let's proclaim loud and clear that Faith can move mountains.





By Rev. Harutyun Khachatryan\*

ne of my favorite characteristics of our God is His endless creativity. Afterward, we and everything surrounding us is the product of that. It all began in the opening five words of the Holy Scriptures "In the beginning, God created..." -Genesis 1:1. A creative God who created, continues to create, and sustains all His creation in His hands. Why do I find this so impressive and inspirational? I'm glad you asked.

Think about this process of creating for a moment. Before his hands go to work, his mind has created something to which his heart has assigned a purpose, so we can declare that all things were purposefully created. King David in his Psalms constantly reminds us how He sees God through his creation. When David looks toward the heavens, these remind him of God; counting the stars at midnight or gazing at the beauty of the mountains during sunrise, or simply looking through the eyes of his fellow man, everything and everyone point and reveal the Creator.

These stories are many, and each is a testimony of God's goodness, but today I want to draw your attention to the beautiful story of Christmas. Theologians affirm an estimate of 400 years of silence as the transition from the Old to the New Testament. I want to label these as the years of setting the platform. Just as a director would begin observing the cast, choosing the place, assigning the roles, and designing the sets, think of God as the creator, writer, and director of this magnificent story.

What impresses and inspires me the most, is His selection of people, places, and periods in history. *Only a mastermind could make such a perfect arrangement from these many imperfect resources,* and that's what I love about Him.

While there were kings and queens, God's creative mind chose a humble virgin and a hardworking ordinary carpenter. While there were royal palaces and decorated cribs, God's creative mind saw a humble barn and a simple site where the baby would be laid. While there were High Priests and Levites offering sacrifices in the synagogues, God's creative mind saw a few wise men in the east who would journey hundreds of miles to reveal the identity of this babe with their specific gifts. And while there were many cities on the hills, God's creative mind saw a forgotten city named Bethlehem, which in Hebrew means "house of bread," where the bread of Life would be sent to all. The nativity story yet again proves God's creative character.

Friends, during this special season and as we celebrate the Birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, I want you to know that there are no spectators in this story. Pay attention to **Prophet Isaiah 9:6** –

For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Did you notice that next to the magnitude of this divine revelation about the person of Jesus Christ also tells us whom God had in mind? Yes, you! "Unto us" means Christmas is for you; Jesus came for you, the Son was born and given to you. God had you in mind in the creation of the Christmas story.

God has created you on purpose, with a purpose, and for a purpose. And if you have disqualified yourself, remember that *God tends to see what others can't, use whom others won't, and love when others don't. Our God is different, and I love that about Him.* 

Merry Christmas.



\* Rev. Harutyun Khachatryan is the Senior Pastor of the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, CA.

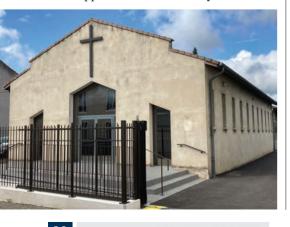


t was in 1924 that the spiritual work of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Valence, France began under the leadership of **Kévork Kieusseian** who was keen to bring together Armenian Evangelical Christians.

Several people including **Dikran Meguerditchian**, **Zaven Guluchian**, **and Rev. Hovhanes Ghazarossian** followed one another until the arrival of Rev. Vahan Sahagian in 1928.

Professor Krikor Khayiguian, an ordained Minister, ensured the continuation of the work, which was already undertaken until 1938, when **Rev. Israel Aprahamian** took over. The worship services were held on Sunday afternoons in the sanctuary of the Reformed Church of Valence.

Since 1946, the Armenian evangelical community of Valence had held its worship service on Rue Bouffier. Rev. Aprahamian served for many years in Valence. Besides his pastoral service, he also offered Armenian language courses. In 1962, Rev. Daniel Sahagian was appointed as the Pastor of the Church and served until 1972. At that time, a new building was purchased on Rue Jonchère. The church had about forty worshippers and about twenty children in



Sunday school. Rev. Sahagian put a lot of his energy into organizing summer camps for children and teenagers. He also created a church theater group which regularly presented shows in Armenian on Christian themes or Armenian history.

In 1972, Rev. Sahagian was called to the Paris region and Rev. Zaven Mantcherian succeeded him. Very early on, the church felt cramped within its walls, and the pastor knew how to impose the vision of a beautiful and large church for Valence. Indeed, the numbers were increasing. More than sixty people attended worship services, fifteen young people and more than forty children. The church rented an adjoining room for children's activities. Under his leadership, land was purchased on Rue Roger Salengro in Bourg-lès-Valence and construction work for a church building started. During this time, the church was structured, organized and various activities were put in place.

Rev. Mantcherian left Valence in 1977 and Rev. Aprahamian who, despite his age, took up the torch. The construction work was finished, and a beautiful manse was built next to the sanctuary. The Church began filling up on Sunday mornings, with more than 80 people attending worship services. The adjacent rooms were used for weekday meetings. It was a time of spiritual and community strengthening.

In 1982, **Rev. Gilbert Léonian** succeeded Rev. Aprahamian. Through his love for the work of God and his love for the Armenian people, he was able to win the sympathy and respect of all. Again, the Council and the Pastor decided to build new annex rooms and complete the embellishment of the church surroundings. About 110 people attended the worship service, 40 children in Sunday School and 20 teenagers in youth

ministries. Jéma Taboyan, responsible for the ministry among children and youth within the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of France, was also a parish assistant in Valence starting in 1990. She contributed by bringing a spiritual dynamic.

Soon after the 1988 earthquake in Armenia, the whole church was fully involved in bringing emergency aid to be provided within the framework of SOS Armenia, an association which brought together the churches and various Armenian associations. Spiritual broadcasts also started twice a week on the local Armenian radio station "Radio A."

Rev. Jacques Tchoghandjian was appointed Pastor of the church in 1993 and ensured the spiritual strengthening of the entire congregation. It was during his service that the church was able to buy a plot adjoining the church to enlarge its small parking lot. The church continues to grow with the arrival of many children.

In 2003, **Rev. Krikor Khayiguian**, grandson of Professor Khayiguian, started to serve after Rev. Tchoghandjian. He brought a spiritual and cultural dynamism to the life of the church by creating a show "The Children of ARARAT" – a musical fresco with more than 200 musicians, singers, dancers, and actors. A single performance in the largest hall in the city brought more than 2,000 spectators who came to appreciate the "Evangelical-Armenian" message.

The church was again too small, and the council thought about enlarging the church: there were now 85 members and more than 120 people in church on Sundays.

From 2010 to 2011 the pulpit was vacant, and the Church Council assumed the daily life of the church by inviting pastors from the region and the Armenian Evangelical Union.





Rev. Elie Jalouf was appointed in 2011 as the Church Pastor and served until 2020. During this period, the Council decided to renovate the church by expanding and renovating the church internally. Rev. Jalouf had, among other things, concern for the organization of the church and the ministry of pastoral visits.

Rev. Dr. René Léonian succeeded Rev. Jalouf as interim Pastor and served until 2022. Under his direction the renovation of the parking lot and the fencing was completed. Rev. Léonian also revived most of the activities of the life of the church and helped the church reflect on its vision and role in society. He helped redefine the biblical foundations as well as the purpose of the Church.

In June 2022, **Pastor Hagop Koujikian** was appointed to serve the Church in Valence. His presence has helped energize the Church in all areas opening a new page in the life of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Valence. Pastor Koujikian will continue the work of his predecessors by bringing his personal imprint.

Today, the Armenian Evangelical Church of Valence continues to be faithful to its calling: to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to every creature.

Church life revolves around Sunday activities: Bilingual Sunday Worship Service (Armenian/French) and Sunday school. The Pastor delivers the sermon, and the young people lead the worship.

During the week, several meetings are organized including prayer meetings and Bible studies. Teenagers and young people have specific meetings for their age groups. On Mondays, the Pastor and a team host an Armenian program on the airwaves of Armenian Radio.

The Armenian Evangelical Church of Valence is involved in the life and activities of the Armenian community. There is a brotherly and friendly relationship with the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Armenian Catholic Church, and the Maranatha Armenian Brethren Church. The Armenian Evangelical Church of Valence also has a very good relationship with all the French Christian churches both Protestant and Catholic in the region.

Several parishioners of the Church of Valence are involved in activities at the national level of the Armenian Evangelical churches. Summer and winter camps for all ages take place at the Union's two camps. They are also involved in spiritual retreats for teenagers and young people; "Hope for Armenia; and Mission for the Middle East.

#### Hagop Koujikian Installed as Pastor of Armenian Evangelical Church of Valence

On Sunday, September 4, 2022, the Installation of Pastor Hagop Koujikian was held at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Valence, France. The Installation was officiated by Rev. Joël Mikaélian, President of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of France. Rev. Gilbert Léonian, Rev. Jacques Tchoghandjian and other ministers present at the Installation service delivered their congratulations and words of encouragement to the new Pastor.

Following the Installation service, the attendees were invited to the church gardens for a reception to honor the new Pastor.

Born January 27, 1987, in Aleppo, Syria, Pastor Koujikian is married to Ester, and they have two children, a son Hesou (2) and a two-month-old daughter Lea. Pastor Koujikian, who followed his parents to Lebanon in the early 2000s, spent his youth in Beirut where he was active in the Armenian community.

Pastor Koujikian attended the Armenian Evangelical Bethel School in Aleppo and, after arriving in France in 2015, attended theology classes at the Biblical Institute of Nogent sur Marne. Speaking five languages - Armenian, French, English, Arabic, and Turkish - Pastor Hagop Koujikian is a man of communication, sharing, and listening.



Rev. Jöel Mikaélian, President of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches of France, officiates the installation of Pastor Hagop Koujikian. Standing L to R: Rev. Jacques Tchoghandjian, Rev. Gilbert Léonian, Francis Roumeas, Josias Tchagaspanian, Pastor Hagop and Ester Koujikian and Daniel Poujol.



### **AEWC Holds 2022 Biennial Meeting in Paramus, NJ**

By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, AEWC Executive Director

he Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC) paid its respects to the Armenian victims of Azeri aggression in the Southern towns of Armenia on September 12, 2022, during its 2022 Biennial Meeting. The Council, which met on October 21, 2022, during the AMAA's Annual Meeting in Paramus, NJ, also condemned the Azeri government for its unprovoked aggression against the peaceful Armenian population and the indiscriminate shelling of contact towns and villages.

AEWC, under the leadership of its Executive Director Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, also appealed to the international community to condemn Azerbaijan's continuous violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia.

Also discussed was the status of Armenian communities in the Middle East, particu-

larly in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq. Despite the harsh economic realities, the severe devaluation of the local currencies and a number of unfavorable circumstances, the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East rose above many obstacles, challenging experiences and marched forward.

The Council extended its appreciation to the church Unions and missionary organizations, including Hope for Armenia, Stephen Philibosian Foundation, and particularly the Armenian Missionary Association of America that extended their financial assistance to these Armenian communities. The Council further pledged to continue its moral and financial support as needed.

"Since both the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh are in one of the fateful stages of our recent history," said Rev. Dr. Tootikian, "the Armenian Evangelical World Council calls all Armenians worldwide to recognize the gravity of the moment, to lay aside their political and ideological differences, and unite around the Armenian nation reclaiming our destiny together for the sake of the freedom and security of our Fatherland."



**Standing left to right:** Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepian, Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian, Rev. Samuel Albarian, Rev. Dr. René Léonian, Rev. Albert Paytyan.

Sitting left to right: Mrs. Joyce Philibosian Stein, Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, Mr. Zaven Khanjian, Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Rev. Joël Mikaélian, Rev. Dr. Haroutune Selimian

Absent from the photo: Dr. Nurhan Helvacian.



### **Haigazian University Board** of Trustees Meets in Los Angeles

he Board of Trustees of Haigazian University (HU) held its biannual meeting on October 28, 2022, at the United Armenian Congregational Church in Los Angeles, California. The agenda included status reports of the various departments, the University's main challenges and plans for the future. The discussion also focused on the dire need for student scholarships and the issue of rising energy costs.

The Board renewed its full commitment to the critical mission of Haigazian University in Lebanon and to the Middle East as an oasis of education amid turbulence and a pillar of hope for future generations in the midst of discouragement.

Grateful for the commitment and perseverance of the HU community in Beirut, the Board expressed its appreciation for the resilience of the students, faculty, and staff in these challenging times.





#### **UAECNE Holds Its 75th General Assembly**

he 75th General Assembly of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE) was held on Tuesday, November 22, 2022, at the KCHAG Center, attended by approximately 50 pastors, delegates and guests. Beginning with a worship service, UAECNE Honorary President Rev. Mgrdich Karagoezian delivered a sermon entitled "Voluntary Difficulty" based on Matthew 7:13-27. The Honorary President offered a verbal report of the last few months of his service, whereafter the UAECNE Acting President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian outlined details of the transition period and presented the Central Committee's report.



It was an opportunity to praise God, as the Assembly affirmed the continuation of two young pastors' preaching licenses: Pastor Asadour Mncherian (Aleppo) and Pastor Shant Agishian (Kessab). The Assembly's gratitude to God increased all the more when ratifying the Ordination Committee's recommendation to ordain Pastor Jirair Ghazarian (Beirut).

Printed reports of the churches and organizations were distributed to the delegates at registration time, some of which were presented verbally.

The final tasks were decisions relating to temporary arrangements for the Union presidency, as well as election of Central Committee members. This General Assembly ended in prayer, followed by the recitation of the Lord's Prayer by all the attendees.

A day before the General Assembly, on Monday, seventeen pastors from Lebanon, Syria and Greece held their one-day pastoral retreat.

The pastors shared their blessings and challenges in ministry. The remainder of the day was given to examining Union and pastoral issues, the effect of conditions in the Middle East on Armenian Evangelical churches, matters of principle, and other issues that churches and especially youth face today.

An added blessing for the day was a video call with the pastors of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of France (UAECF), who were also holding their pastoral retreat. After a brief time of sharing, one pastor from each Union offered prayers to God for the pastors of the other Union.

Standing firmly in its Christian faith, and devoting itself to  $Christian \, mission, the \, AMAA \, continues \, to \, pray \, and \, support \, the \,$ activities of the Armenian Evangelical Unions worldwide. *UAECNE and UAECF pastors join in prayer via video call.* 





## Celebratory Dinner on the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Merdinian School and 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Merdinian Women's Auxiliary

## Appreciates Dr. Vahe Nalbandian's 15 years of Dedicated Service and Pays Tribute to the Members of the Women's Auxiliary

By Louisa Janbazian, Co-Chair of Merdinian School Women's Auxiliary

hoenicia restaurant's banquet hall in Glendale, CA was filled to capacity on Sunday, October 2, where friends and supporters of C & E Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School of Sherman Oaks, CA gathered for a dinner celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the School, to appreciate Dr. Vahe Nalbandian's 15 years of dedicated service to the School as Chairman and Treasurer of the Board, and the 25th Anniversary of the Merdinian Women's Auxiliary to honor all the women who have served on the Auxiliary Board with love and devotion.

After the National Anthems sung by vocalists Ani Marderosian and Arshag Choukourian, Rev. Harut Khachatryan, Senior Pastor of the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, CA, brought the greetings of the Church and offered the Invocation. "The United Armenian Congregational Church, from the days of the School in its Sunday School classrooms to today's vital School facility, stands firm in its commitment to the growth

and success of Merdinian School," said Rev. Khachatryan.

George Phillips Jr. Esq., Vice-Chair of Merdinian School Board, brought the greetings of the Board and introduced Dr. Souzy Ohanian the newly appointed Principal of the School.

Merdinian School has been very dear to Mr. Phillips and his family. His father, George Phillips Sr. Esq. formed the legal entity, was one of the founders of the School, and was involved in its initial funding and purchase of the adjoining property. His mother Suzie Phillips and his wife Dina have been involved in the School's Women's Auxiliary since the beginning, and Dina was the Auxiliary's founding member and Chair. Mr. Phillips served on the School Board 25 years ago as well. "The School is an institution we have always supported, as we believe very strongly that an early education, grounded in Christian and Armenian instruction, is a key to shaping our community's future," said Mr. Phillips.

Principal Ohanian greeted the guests and gave a brief update on the current and

future projects of the School. "I would like to take a moment to express my immense gratitude for the hard work and incredible dedication to Merdinian and the world of education that current and past teachers have contributed and continue to contribute," said Dr. Ohanian. "Merdinian's story would not be possible without these incredible teachers, faculty, and staff — many of whom are here today. They are the most important members of the School. They give our children purpose, set them up for success as citizens of our world, and inspire in them a drive to do well and succeed in life."

Following the recitation of Vahan Tekeyan's "Partsratsum/Climbing" Poem by a Merdinian Alumna Natelle Ezadjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian brought the greetings of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and recognized the dedicated service of the Honoree Dr. Vahe Nalbandian, Ph.D. to Merdinian School for the past 15 years in his capacity as the Chair and the Treasurer of the Board (appointed by the AMAA). "Dr. Nalbandian carries

a profound record of service that moved the School forward in leaps and bounds throughout his years of service," said Mr. Khanjian. "He tirelessly and diligently led the School Board and managed its finances. His sacrificial service to the School and its adorable children is the optimum example of following the footsteps of our Lord. Jesus Christ on earth."

Mr. Khanjian was involved in the founding of Merdinian School in 1982. He was also directly involved in the founding of the Merdinian Women's Auxiliary walking parallel the path of service and devotion of all Auxiliary members over the years. He commended the women who served on the Board of the Women's Auxiliary with much love and devotion over the past 25 years. "Their material and spiritual contribution to the School and its children is invaluable," said Mr. Khanjian.

Assemblymember Adrin Nazarian of California's 46th Assembly District presented a special Resolution to Dr. Nalbandian and thanked him for his unique and invaluable service to the School as the Chair and Treasurer of its Board over the past 15 years.

Dr. Nalbandian thanked the guests for honoring him by their presence. He highlighted the School's important accomplishments during the past fifteen years, including major infrastructure improvements, such as construction of the Bezjian Family Building, and adoption of state-of-the-art technologies that enhanced the students' learning experience. When the School closed its doors to in-person instruction in early 2020 due the pandemic, these technologies proved crucial to the School's successful transition to distance learning smoothly and in record time. Dr. Nalbandian thanked organizations and individuals whose generous financial support made these improvements possible. He also recognized individuals who offered their labors and expertise to assist the school in carrying out various infrastructure and technology initiatives. Dr. Nalbandian ended his speech by thanking the Women's Auxiliary for organizing this event in appreciation of his service to the School.

After musical performances vocalists Marderosian and Choukourian, Sona Khanjian, a founding member of Merdinian Women's Auxiliary and Chair of the Auxiliary Board for several years, talked about the initial years of the founding of the Auxiliary and recognized all the women who have served on the Board over the past

25 years. Mrs. Khanjian gave special tribute to Elizabeth Agbabian, who 25 years ago had the vision to establish Merdinian Women's the Auxiliary and continues to serve on its Board until today.

Mrs. Agbabian briefly spoke about her vision and initiation of the Women's Auxiliary with the then Principal of the School, Dr. Vahram Shemmassian, and Rev. Dr. Movses Janbazian, Executive Director of AMAA at the time, and thanked all for the tribute. "The purpose of the Auxiliary is to support Armenian Evangelical Education, promote interest in the Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School, further the mission of the School, and render financial support," said Mrs. Agbabian.

The Merdinian Women's Auxiliary was formed in

May 1997 as an affiliate of AMAA. The first meeting of the newly formed Auxiliary Board was held at the home of Suzie Phillips in the presence of the late Rev. Janbazian, the Executive Director of the AMAA.

Closing remarks and Benediction of the Celebratory Dinner was offered by Rev. Serop Megrditchian, Senior Pastor of Cilicia Armenian Evangelical Church of Pasadena, CA.

The Celebratory Dinner event was organized by the Merdinian Women's Auxiliary, Co-Chaired by Ani Hanessian and Louisa Janbazian, and was capably emceed by Shogher Shanoian, an alumna, parent, and staff member of the School serving as its Administrative and Admissions Coordinator. The proceeds



Elizabeth Agbabian.



& Mrs. Vahe and Seta Nalbandian and Zaven Khanjian.



from the event will benefit the Merdinian School Scholarship Fund.

Established in 1982 by the AMAA and the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, the C & E Merdinian School is the only Armenian Evangelical School in North America supported by the AMAA. The School offers a broad-based curriculum that fosters academic excellence, high moral values, and spiritual enrichment in the Armenian Evangelical tradition. The School strives to create a safe and nurturing environment where every student receives personal attention to become a successful and responsible individual.

We praise God for the past 40 years of Merdinian School and ask for God's guidance in this 41st academic year and all the years to come.



Sona Khanjian.



## AMAA Child and Orphan Care Luncheon and Fashion Show Honors a Founding Member and Community Activist Savey Tufenkian



By Eileen Keusseyan, LA Child and Orphan Care Committee Member

he AMAA Child and Orphan Care Luncheon and Fashion Show was **Back** and **In Full Swing** after going through the shutdowns, the lockdowns, the anxiety, and apprehension of COVID-19! On May 21, 2022, the ballroom at the Beverly Hills Hotel in Beverly Hils, CA was lit up from within not only by the gorgeous chandeliers hanging from the rose-adorned ceiling but by Savey Tufenkian's angelic soul as we honored her memory and celebrated her global impact, from here in Los Angeles, to our Homeland in Armenia.

Mrs. Tufenkian was one of our founding members, a community activist, and a pillar of strength, dedication, and ardor amongst us. Her life, her persona, her benevolence and her unwavering dedication to children and orphans impacted not just the AMAA care recipients since its founding following

a devastating earthquake in Armenia, but the community at large, including every single guest. The glimmer in her eyes and her smile as she entered a room, any room, captivated us all. And on May 21st, her soul was smiling down on us, with a sparkle in her eyes as the children walked down the runway, giggling, and skipping, as 400 guests cheered them on.

Our 2022 Luncheon and Fashion Show raised over \$400,000 in the aftermath of COVID quarantines and social distancing, and all event proceeds have been earmarked to benefit child and orphan care programs in Armenia and Artsakh. Along with our guests, Auntie Savey as she was fondly known to all, was a part of the magic, making needy children's wishes in Armenia and Artsakh come true – just as she always did and continues to do with the legacy she has left behind.

As always, the luncheon was striking and extraordinary to say the least. The



Savey Tufenkian.

silent auction committee, led by Sandy McNutt, procured some of the most beautiful items, experiences, and adventures!



Child and Orphan Care Committee members pray before the event.



Child and Orphan Care Luncheon and Fashion Show.

Bidding started the moment our doors opened, with the reception room buzzing anxiously with our guests racing to place the winning sticker on the bid sheets. All items brought in the highest bids ever, making our event so very successful... again to the tune of \$400,000 and all for our children in need.

To date, generous donations have helped facilitate sponsorship of 1,663 children, support 6 kindergartens in Armenia and Artsakh, support 5 Shogh community-based educational day centers in Yerevan, Vanadzor, Gyumri, Askeran, and Shushi, provide summer and day camp experiences for nearly 5,000 children and youth, provide Christmas programs at 42 locations, including gift packages for 7,200 children, offer various art, sports, theater and tutoring classes for 1,500 children, assist needy families with relief packages, and provide medical and dental care to over 6,000 children.

The amount of support has always been phenomenal, and it has all come from our guests, our supporters, and our donors! The children are so very grateful for all that you



AMAA LA Child and Orphan Care Committee.

have done for them and continue to do. On behalf of all the children who have benefitted one way or another from your generosity, we thank you and can't wait to see you at our 2023 event.

Our next Luncheon and Fashion Show is on March 4, 2023! Join us and continue to be part of an event that can change the lives of so many children far away by distance, but so very close in our hearts.





#### Boston Orphan and Child Care 2022 Gala Raises Funds to Support Children Throughout Armenia and Artsakh



Boston Orphan and Child Care Committee members.

ith the success of last year's AMAA Boston Orphan and Child Care 2021 Gala, young professionals stepped forward wanting to be part of the efforts to support impoverished children throughout Armenia and Artsakh. They worked tirelessly with Committee members planning an event and bringing a new dimension to the Gala event.

The setting sun on a crisp September 28th evening provided a glowing backdrop to the Wellesley Country Club in Wellesley, MA as supporters poured through the doors. John Baboian, jazz guitarist, composer, and Professor at the Berklee School of Music, abandoned his jazz tradition to enhance the atmosphere with classical Armenian melodies to welcome everyone to an evening filled with love for our people. Rev. Dr. Ron Tovmassian, the newly appointed Field Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, blessed the evening's attendees

and activities with an inspiring invocation remembering all our people struggling in Armenia, Artsakh, Lebanon, and Syria.

Committee Co-Chairs Susan Adamian Covo and Phyllis Dohanian introduced the evening's emcees, Grace Bottomley of Salem, NH and Arie Orchanian of Lexington, MA. Ara Sarkissian and Simon Baiatian of Storica Vineyards were introduced and presented wines from Armenia throughout the cocktail reception and dinner. Mr. Sarkissian's story included efforts to revive the ancient wine industry in Armenia to provide local jobs in an historic industry. He educated the guests about the various grapes from vines that are over 6,000 years old, some of which were used to make the wines our attendees were fortunate enough to taste. Many supporters ordered wines as further support to the Orphan and Child Care fundraiser.

Following dinner, Christina Kew and Luke Bottomley relayed their experiences in Armenia last summer visiting some of the families who have been assisted through











Guitarist John Baboian.

this program. They heard firsthand what a difference child sponsorship has made in their lives and for their education. Their heartfelt message of their weeks with the desperately poor encouraged those who had not previously sponsored a child to step forward immediately, not missing an opportunity to help the youngest of our children. Jeanmarie Papelian, a long-time supporter of the AMAA and former Board



Boston Orphan and Child Care 2022 Gala.

member, offered her personal experiences working with social workers in Armenia since the time of the 1988 earthquake and meeting so many of the children, now adults, our supporters have previously helped to a new life where they could provide for themselves and their families.

Grace Bottomley enthusiastically encouraged everyone to enjoy the opportunities presented by the silent auction and Armenian wine purchases which contribute to the Orphan and Child Care Program. Enthusiasm for lively bidding on handmade items from Armenia, designer items, event tickets, and sports packages left everyone feeling like not only the children but each one of us was a winner who accepted the opportunity of contributing to a brighter future for our brothers and sisters.





Rev. Pakrad Berjekian, Co-Chair Kathy Kassardjian, Janet Desmond, Alice Robbins, and AJ Janoyan.

## San Diego SparkleS Foundation Gift to AMAA Orphan & Child Care Fund

he Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) grate-fully announced receipt of \$25,000 provided by the San Diego SparkleS Foundation. The donation will be directed to orphan children living on the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

"Children in war-torn areas still have dreams for their futures," said Magda Poulos, AMAA Director of Operations and Donor Relations.

"With the arrival of winter in the Caucuses, we will steward these funds to provide for warm shelter, clothing, blankets, and most of all, hope."

AMAA provides food and clothing distribution, medical and dental services, education centers, and social workers to address childhood trauma in Armenia and Artsakh. All donations go directly to services for the children.

"Some of these children have lost not just their homes, but their families," said Kathy Kassardjian, President of the San Diego SparkleS Foundation.
"The San Diego's Children's Benefit Fashion Show donation will help make a difference in their lives."

Children from across San Diego County participated in the San Diego Children's Benefit Fashion Show & Luncheon on September 17, 2022, at the Hyatt Regency La Jolla, CA. Two hundred guests— from Hillcrest to North County— contributed to the fundraiser supporting children at-risk abroad and in San Diego. Five charities were identified as recipients.

In 2023, The San Diego SparkleS Children's Benefit Fashion Show will be held on September 30. The event supports charities dedicated to protecting children in San Diego and children displaced by war.



## AMAA Welcomes Artsakh Foreign Minister David Babayan

he Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) welcomed a delegation from Artsakh, headed by Artsakh Foreign Minister David Babayan at a dinner reception held on September 27, 2022, at 6 pm at the Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School in Sherman Oaks, CA.

Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO welcomed the guests to the social hall of the School where, after introductions and welcoming words Mr. Babayan presented a gift of remembrance to AMAA which was received by AMAA President Dr. Nazareth Darakjian.

On behalf of the School, Principal Dr. Souzy Ohanian welcomed the guests and introduced the students who presented a bouquet of Armenian Patriotic songs and recitations.

During the reception/dinner Mr. Khanjian introduced the AMAA

guests followed by some Armenian patriotic and spiritual songs presented

by Rev. Harut Khachatryan, Senior Pastor of the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles.

Mr. Khanjian used a Power Point presentation to introduce AMAA's mission and service

ministry in Artsakh.

Mr. Khanjian reaffirmed AMAA's commitment to continue its outreach to Artsakh and

for our people in Artsakh.

Dr. Darakjian thanked Zaven and Sona Khanjian as well as Principal Dr. Ohanian for organizing this reception. He also thanked Mr. Babayan and his delegation for honoring us with their visit.

In his remarks Mr. Babayan stressed the long-term involvement of the Missionary Association in the humanitarian programs being implemented in Artsakh and expressed hope that the patriotic activities would be continued for the sake of Artsakh and for the people of Artsakh.



FM David Babayan greets the guests.



FM David Babayan presents a gift of remembrance to the AMAA.





## AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian Participates in the Global Armenian Summit

rganized by the Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, the Global Armenian Summit was held October 28 to 31 in Yerevan, Armenia. The purpose of the Summit was to serve as a dynamic forum for representatives of the Diaspora, together with their local counterparts, to discuss the most pressing challenges and strategic questions of pan-Armenian significance.

The agenda of the Summit included topics such as national security, protecting Armenia's interests globally, repatriation, economic engagement, preservation of Armenian identity, Diaspora representation within Armenia's governing structures, and self-organization within the Diaspora.

The proposals, solutions, and results achieved at the Summit will serve as the cornerstone for developing new approaches to our common pan-Armenian agenda. The Summit will provide Armenia and the Diaspora the opportunity to identify priorities and develop a roadmap for future cooperation.

During "Armenia as a Lifeline: Supporting Diaspora Communities in Distress" Breakout Session, Lusine Ohanyan, Strategic Initiatives Department Manager at Armenian Missionary Association of America in Armenia, along with other international NGOs and diplomatic representatives, shared AMAA's experience with Diaspora communities that are in distress and gave different ideas on how to support the communities and have positive impacts.

The final day at the Global Armenian Summit 22 started with the "Best practices in supporting Diaspora communities across the globe" panel moderated by Anna Givargizian, Doctor of Cultural Studies, Associate Professor at Moscow State Pedagogical University, and Editor-in-Chief of "Zham" magazine.



Zaven Khanjian (on screen) participates remotely as a panelist in the Global Armenian Summit



Lusine Ohanyan (second from right), Strategic Initiatives Department Manager at AMAA Armenia, participates in the Global Armenian Summit along with other international NGOs and diplomatic representatives.

Panelists Zaven Khanjian, Executive Director/CEO of the Armenian Missionary Association of America, along with Nayat Karakoseoglu, Hrant Dink Foundation Program Coordinator, Samvel Mkoyan, Executive Director of the 'Support to Javakh' Fund, Razmik Panossian, Director of the Armenian Communities Department at Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and Nazar Altun, General Counsel at Tishman Realty Corporation, exchanged ideas on how to assist Diaspora communities all over the world and be stronger and more impactful across the globe.

#### **AMAA Sundays Held in Canada, California, and Massachusetts**

#### Armenian Evangelical Church of Cambridge, ON, Canada

arout Nercessian, former AMAA Armenia Representative and currently the AMAA Representative in Canada, joined the Armenian Evangelical Church of Cambridge, ON, Canada and preached on the topic of "Sacrifice" at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Cambridge, Ontario Canada's AMAA Sunday, October 16, 2022. He closed the sermon with the illustration of the German missionary Sister Hanna Christenn's service in Anjar, Lebanon and then in Armenia. A few years ago, the Cambridge Church honored Sister Hanna and raised funds for her work. Following the service, he made a presentation with an overview of AMAA's work around



Harout Nercessian with the congregation of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Cambridge.

the globe and showed a film about the Armenian Evangelical Secondary School of Anjar.

Mr. Nercessian also brought greetings from AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian and mentioned the events in Armenia for the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

Currently Brother Ara Balukjian, Pastor of the Brotherhood Church in Toronto, leads the worship services in Cambridge on Sunday.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Nercessian also preached at the Toronto Church.

#### Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church, Glendale, CA

n Sunday, November 6, 2022, AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian worshipped with Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church (AEBC) of Glendale, CA and brought greetings from the Association. He also updated the congregation on the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church commemoration held in Armenia as well as the AMAA's recent 103rd Annual Meeting held in New Jersey. Mr. Khanjian commended AEBC for its involvement in supporting mission projects.

Zaven Khanjian with Rev. Dikran Shanlian, Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church of Glendale, CA.



Zaven Khanjian at the Armenian Nazarene Church of Glendale, CA.

### **Armenian Nazarene** Church, Glendale, CA

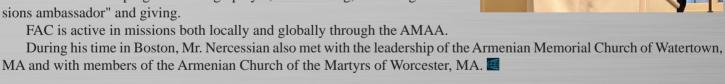
n Sunday, October 30, 2022, AMAA Executive Director/CEO Zaven Khanjian joined the Armenian Nazarene Church of Glendale, CA to share God's word and with a PowerPoint presentation he spoke about the vast outreach programs of the AMAA in 24 countries around the world.

#### First Armenian Church, Belmont, MA

n Sunday November 13, 2022, Harout Nercessian joined the First Armenian church of Belmont, MA for AMAA Sunday. Rev. Dikran Youmshakian, the Guest Minister of the Church, delivered the Armenian sermon. The topic of his sermon was "Jesus feeding the multitudes." Mr. Nercessian preached in English on "Living Sacrifices" based on Romans 11:33-12:2.

Following the service, the congregation gathered at the social hall for a luncheon during which Mr. Nercessian made a presentation on the four pillars of AMAA mission programs around the globe – Church/Evangelism, Education, Humanitarian and Youth. He also made a video presentation about "Empower an Artsakh Family" program, and asked the attendees to consider participating in AMAA's mission programs through prayer, volunteering, becoming a "missions ambassador" and giving.

MA and with members of the Armenian Church of the Martyrs of Worcester, MA.





L to R: Stephen Papazian, Harout Nercessian and Rev. Stephen Carlyle, Pastor of the Armenian Church of the Martyrs, Worcester, MA.



Harout Nercessian joins the children of First Armenian Church to hear Rev. Dikran Youmshakian's Children's message.



## Action Chrétienne En Orient

#### **Celebrates Centennial**



Armenian Evangelical delegates at St. Pierre le Jeune.

#### By Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian\*

n the first week of October 2022 the representatives of three European Mission Organizations and three Middle Eastern Church bodies including the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East gathered in Strasbourg, France to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Action Chrétienne en Orient (ACO). The celebration included seminars on topics such as the social and spiritual situation and challenges in the Middle East, hope in time of crisis and the humanitarian work in the Middle East. On Sunday October 2, the Centennial celebration took place at St. Pierre le Jeune of Strasbourg, the place from where ACO's journey started with Paul Berron. The international guests had the opportunity to visit mission centers, theological Schools and the Council of Europe in Strasbourg and Paris. Following the celebration, the Executive Committee and the General Assembly of the ACO Fe had their meetings. The Armenian delegates from the Middle East had an opportunity to meet with the leaders of the Armenian Evangelical Church Issy-les-Moulineaux. The concluding Worship Service took place at the Issy-les-Moulineaux Church on October 9, 2022.



Paul Berron with his wife Madeleine Hey.

ACO was established thanks to the commitment of an Alsatian Pastor Paul Berron in the midst of troubled times for the Middle East, shaken by the First World War.

Grown in a pastoral protestant family, Paul Berron studied theology and felt the call to proclaim the Gospel in the East among the Muslim. The First World War changed the plans. In 1916, he was sent to the East to serve as a military chaplain. During this time, he witnessed the Genocide that struck the Armenian community in Ottoman Empire. Paul Berron stayed in Aleppo until 1919 and together with other westerners, was able to carry out some humanitarian aid work.

Paul Berron returned to Alsace, as a French citizen. His missionary calling for the East remained vivid and he pursued his work for the German mission organization Hilfsbund which sent him in 1922 on a mission to assess the Syrian situation, thanks to his French passport.

The needs of the Armenian refugees from Aleppo were tremendous, but Syria was controlled by France and work within the scope of the German mission was impossible. A new organization was needed and this is why, on December 6, 1922 "Action Chrétienne en Orient" was founded.

The ACO had three main goals: material aid to the Armenians, spiritual work among Eastern Christians and mission among Muslims. Spirituality would always be at the heart of Paul Berron's and other missionaries' commitment. They lived a life based on prayer and testimony in an environment preoccupied by tangible and humanitarian questions affecting the lives of Armenians in the camps of Aleppo.

The ACO had an important role in helping the Armenian Genocide survivors and refugees in France to establish worshiping communities of Armenian Evangelical churches in France. In the early 1930s, a center was built in Aleppo (Church of Christ) to help expand the mission and the headquarters of the ACO was established in Strasbourg, Meinau, which is still active today. (For more

detailed pictorial history of ACO please visit: https://action-chretienne-orient.fr/accueilexpo-gb/)

To this day ACO France together with a Dutch (GZB) and a Swiss (DM) mission organization and three church bodies in Syria, Lebanon and Iran form a fellowship (ACO Fe). This fellowship supports the humanitarian, educational and spiritual work of these three church unions/synods in the Middle East.

\* Rev. Hendrik
Shanazarian is the
Minister to the Armenian
Evangelical Union of
North America.



## **Church of Christ**

Aleppo, Syria



The building of Church of Christ in Aleppo, Syria.

#### By Rev. Bchara Moussa Oghli\*

took refuge in Aleppo.

he Church of Christ of Aleppo, Syria derives its mission from the Gospel, and is a member of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. It is a center for medical, social, and spiritual services for all the sons and daughters of its Armenian community and its variant ethnic Syrian society.

The Church of Christ was founded by the Action Chrétienne en Orient (ACO), a European mission society which includes members from France, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. ACO was set out in Strasbourg, northeastern France, on December 6, 1922, initiated by the Alsatian Rev. Paul Berron (1887-1970), to help survivors of the Genocide of 1915. A few days later, in December 1922, the missionaries of ACO arrived to start their Action among the thousands of Genocide survivors who

The location of the ACO center was selected in the midst of most of the camps and houses of the Genocide survivors, on the northeastern side of the old part of Aleppo, on a small hill publicly known as Talifon-Hawaii (literally, telephone of the air, i.e., wireless telephone), in the newly developing Al-Sulaymaniyah neighborhood. The people chose to call the center "Miss Büll," after one of the first missionaries of the center, the Estonian Miss Hedwige Büll (1887-1981).

The mission center of the ACO was handed over to the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the 1960s, and the foreign missioners left the country, except for the last foreign missioner Anne-Marie Beck (1909-2003) of Niederbronn, France, known as Madam Tartar. She was able to stay because she was married to the retired Damascene tailor, the Preacher of the Church of Christ, Brother Elias Tartar (1887-1975).

For its part, the Union recognized the Church of Christ as its missionary wing, oversaw it through its Central Committee, and appointed an ordained pastor to manage its ministries. The first Pastor was Rev. Barkev Arakel Apartian (1937-1997).

We read in the "Constitution of the Church of Christ, Aleppo, Syria," which was prepared and authorized by the Central Committee of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, with representatives of ACO, on October 10, 1968: "(Art 1) The name of the organization is 'The Church of Christ.' (Art 2) The Church of Christ is, as an Evangelistic Center, a member of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. (Art 3) The aim of the Church of Christ is to continue the work of Action Chrétienne en Orient in the spiritual, philanthropic, and educational fields. (Art 4) As an Evangelistic Center, the Church of Christ does not administer Baptism or Marriage. It has no members, but it may have friends in the Evangelical Churches, who appreciate its activities and support it. ..."

**The Spiritual Ministry of the Church of Christ** today includes a Worship Service on Sunday morning for Arabic speaking worshippers, and a Bible Study on Monday morning for Armenian ladies, in addition to Sunday School for Armenian children.

Since there is no form of membership in the Church of Christ, we should not expect an accumulation of the number of people attending these services. In fact, the numbers of attendees are limited but the faces are constantly changing, which means that the friends that the Church of Christ eventually make are present in all the shades of the Syrian society.

In addition to that, and due to its reputation as an Evangelical resource center, with ecumenical awareness and care, the potential of the spiritual ministry of the Church of Christ exceeds the basic chapel services. In fact, the servants of the Church of Christ receive educational and consultation requests from people and groups of different backgrounds in Aleppo and all over the country in various biblical, theological, and spiritual fields. This was true in the past and is still true today.

**The Medical Ministry in Bethesda dispensary**, the name of the dispensary of the Church of Christ of Aleppo, is one of the oldest operating General Practitioner dispensaries in town. A dental clinic was added in 1987.

Currently, a General Practitioner receives patients six days a week, and two Dentists cover six days a week. The dispensary is open to all citizens, regardless of their ethnicity and religion, for minimal fees.

The Social Ministry of the Church of Christ used to be a supplementary service through which the medical and dental services were extended to those patients who cannot afford even the minimal fees of the clinics or cannot afford to pay for the prescriptions of the clinic's doctors. In addition, the social ministry provided some financial support to the needy, for medical services outside the church's clinics such as the costs of specialist's consultations, prescriptions, analysis, diagnostic imaging, operations, etc.

When the war irrupted in Syria, in mid-March 2011, the location, and the service history made the Church of Christ of Aleppo's courtyard a place where people afflicted by the war could go for their urgent needs.

In the beginning, we observed an increasing demand for our medical services. Without hesitation or delay, we focused on our Dental and General Practitioner clinics, and made them our lead ministries without any interruption, against all the odds, particularly during the siege of Aleppo (from July 19, 2012, until December 22, 2016).

In fact, as soon as the multiform aggression intensified in a catastrophic and rapid manner, affecting the neighborhoods, houses, workplaces and livelihoods, people started knocking on our door for help. We opened the door wide, gathered all our resources, sat down, listened to their stories, and shared in their needs.

Moreover, in the uproar of the war and its heat, the inner meanings of the texts of the Holy Bible began to be revealed and the intentions of their writers became clearer, in an unprecedented way. It became clear to us that the authors of those books wrote in the midst of the noise and flames of the wars and the distress of their time. The harmony between our circumstances



Sunday School Service headed by Houri Moubahajian.



The Dental Clinic of Church of Christ in Aleppo, Syria.

and theirs revealed the veil from our eyes. This unexpected revelation of texts we have always read, led us to renew our understanding of the biblical messages treasured in them and prompted us deeply to reform our proclamation and our lives in front of God and with the people.



\* Rev. Bchara Moussa Oghli is the Pastor of Church of Christ in Aleppo, Syria.



# Ո՛չ Թէ Դրամը՝ Յապա Մարդը

Ո՜չ թե ինչպես մենբ կը յուսայինբ, հապա իրենբ զիրենբ ալ տուին` նախ Տիրոջ, ու յետոյ մեզի` Աստուծոյ կամբով։ (Բ. Կորնթացիս 8. 5)

#### Մինրան Ճիզմէնեան\*

ին Կտակարանին մէջ կը հանդիպինք այն ճշմարտութեան՝ թէ Աստուած է Տէրը ամէն բանի, եւ մարդուն իրաւունքը որեւէ բանի համար «այս իմս է» ըսելու կը հիմնուի իր կարողութեան վրայ ըսելու թէ «Ինք Աստուծոյ կը պատկանի»:

Ոչ թէ դրամը կարեւոր է Աստուծոյ աչքին, հապա՝ մարդը։ Եթէ շրջենք «դրամ» բառը կազմող գիրերը եւ հակառակ կողմէն կարդանը, ի՞նչ բառ կր կազմուի եթէ ոչ «մարդ»։

Պօղոս Առաքեալ Կորնթոսի Եկեղեցիին գրած իր նամակին մէջ ինչպէ՞ս կը ներկայացնէ այս հարցը։ Նախ ան բարձրօրէն կը գնահատէ Մակեդոնիոյ Եկեղեցին գրելով՝ «Եղբայրնե՜ր, ձեզի կը տեղեկացնենք Աստուծոյ շնորհքին մասին, որ տրուած է Մակեդոնեայի Եկեղեցիներուն» (Բ. Կորնթացիս 8. 1):

Շնորիքը, աստուածային այն սէրն է որ առատօրէն կու գայ եւ կը բաշխուի մարդերու նոյնիսկ, երբ շնորհքը ստացողը արժանի իսկ չէ։ Աստուած կու տայ մեզի ոչ թէ անոր համար որ ստիպուած է տալու, հապա կու տայ՝ անոր համար որ Ան կր սիրէ տալ։

Այս շնորհքին ձրի պարգեւ մը ըլլալու գաղափարը գեղեցկօրէն ներկայացուած է Գանատայի նահանգներէն՝ Սասքաչուանի Լուտերական Եկեղեցիներէն մէկուն խորանին վրայ։ Հոն կը տեսնենք արուեստագէտի մը գործը որ՝ Հայրը, Որդին եւ Սուրբ Հոգին ներկայացնելէ ետք, դիտողին առջեւ կը պարզէ նաեւ զոյգ մը ձեռքեր՝ Աստուծոյ ձեռքերը, որոնք դէպի վար բացուած են, ցոյց տալու Անոր՝ անսակարկ սէրը մեր բոլորին հանդէպ։

Յակոբոս Առաքեալ իր նամակին Ա. Գլխուն 17րդ համարին մէջ կը գրէ.- «**Ամէն բարի նուէր եւ ամէն** կատարեալ պարգեւ վերէն կ՛իջնէ լոյսի Հօրմէն»:

Մենք տնտեսներ ու վերակացուներ ենք միայն։ Պահ մը լրջօրէն մտածենք։ Եթէ իսկապէս կը հաւատանք թէ Աստուած է աղբիւրը բոլոր բարիքներու, ի՞նչպէս դուն եւ ես գոռոզաբար կրնանք ըսել՝ «Իմ հողերս, իմ դրամս, իմ գործս, իմ ժամանակս»։ Ըսել թէ կը հաւատամ երկնի եւ երկրի ստեղծողին եւ հայթայթողին, կը նշանակէ թէ ամէն ինչ որ ունինք Անոր պարգեւած շնոհքն է եւ նուէրը։ Կալուածներս, կեանքս՝ 40, 60, 75 կամ 80 եւ աւելի տարիները որ կ՛ապրիմ, տաղանդներս եւ կարողութիւններս որոնցմով կը գործեմ եւ կը շահիմ, իմս չեն։ Վերջին հաշուով անոնք Աստուծոյ կը պատկանին եւ անոնց աղբիւրը Աստուծոյ բաց ձեռքերն են։

Հաւստացեպին հաւստարիմ տնտեսութեան կեանքը կը սկսի, երբ ան գիտակցի թէ ինչ որ ունի եւ է՝ Աստուծոյ սիրոյն եւ առատ շնորհքին արդիւնքն են։ Շատ կարեւոր եւ յատկանշական է որ Մակեդոնացիները առատ նուէրներ տալէ առաջ, կը գրէ Առաքեալը, «Իրենք զիրենք ալ տուին՝ նախ Տիրոջ, ու յետոյ մեզի՝ Աստուծոյ կամքով»։

Այստեղ տեսնուած փոփոխութիւնը հիմնականին մէջ, դերանուններու փոփոխութիւն մըն է։ Փոխանակ ըսելու իմ կեանքս, իմ ժամանակս, իմ դրամս կամ իմ կարողութիւններս։ Մակեդոնացիները ըսին Իր՝ տուած կեանքը, Իր ժամանակը, հաւատալով որ Ան է աղբիւրը բոլորին եւ Իր շնորհքովն է որ ունէին ինչ որ ունէին։ Ո՛չ հարցը դրամը չէ, հարցը այն է որ մենք որո՞ւ կը պատկանինք։

Որպէս հաւատարիմ տնտես մը, Քրիստոնեան պարտի Աստուծոյ կամքին համաձայն հսկել անոնց շիտակ գործածութեան։ Քրիստոնեային կեանքը իրեն չի պատկանիր, հապա՝ Աստուծոյ։ Վերակացուներ ենք ուրիշի պատկանող ապրանքի մը որուն գործածութեան համար օր մը հաշիւ պիտի տանք։ Այս է տնտեսութեան ճշմարիտ իմաստը։

Պօդոս Առաքեալ կ՛ըսէ.- «**Իրենք զիրենք ալ տուին՝նախ Տիրոջ»։** Այս գաղափարներուն լոյսին տակ, ի՞նչ է արդեօք իմաստը Կիրակի օրեր մեր կատարած նուիրահաւաքին։ Առաքեալը՝ ≺ռովմ. 15. 16 համարին մէջ «**ընդունելի ընծայ»** բառերը կը գործածէ։

Ոչ, սիրելիներ, Աստուծոյ Եկեղեցին մեր դրամին ետեւէն չէ՝ ինչպէս ոմանք կը խորհին։ Այդ մէկը շատ դիւրին եւ չնչին բան մը պիտի ըլլար։ Քրիստոս մեր անձերը կ՛ուզէ, մեր կեանքերը կ՛ուզէ, եւ երբ այս հասկացողութեամբ նուիրումի քայլը առնուի, Աստուծոյ Եկեղեցիին գործն ալ նիւթական գետնի վրայ յառաջ կր տարուի։

Ո՛չ, հարցը դրամը չէ։ Հարցը այն է որ դուն եւ ես կը հասկնա՞նք որ այս կեանքը Աստուծոյ կողմէ ժամանակաւորապէս պարտքի տրուած է մեզի, եւ թէ՝ օր մը մենք հաշիւ պիտի տանք մեր կեանքերուն համար։ Որպէս վերակացուներ համարատու ենք Աստուծոյ ամէն բանի համար՝ ինչպէ՞ս կը խօսինք, ինչպէ՞ս կ՛աշխատինք, կը գործածե՞նք թէ կը ծառայենք մարդերուն, եւ այո՛, բոլոր այն բաներուն համար որոնց առաջին տեղը կու տանք երբ մեր դրամը կը գործածենը։

Այո՛, դրամը կը խօսի, ան կը խոսի մեզի համար առաջնակարգ եղած բաներուն մասին, մեր նախասիրութիւններուն մասին։

Ո՛չ, հարցը դրամը չէ այսօր։ Հարցը այն է որ մենք որո՞ւ կը պատկանինք, եւ ինչո՞ւ կ՛ապրինք։ 🖪

[Քաղուած Կիրակի, Հոկտ. 23, 2022-ի, Աւետարանչականի Կիրակիի Պաշտամունքին քարոզուած պատգամէն, Փարամուսի (Նիւ Ճրրզի) Հայ Երիցական Եկեղեցիին մէջ]։



\* **Միհրան ճիզմեճեան** նախկին Նախագահը եւ ներկայ Ատենապետն է Գանատայի Յայ Աւետարան-չական Ընկերակցութեան



# Յայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի 175-ամեակի Առթիւ Ուղերձ Երեւան, Յայաստան – Յուլիս 2, 2022

**Վեր. Դոկտ. Վահան 3. Թութիկեան,** Գործադիր Տնօրէն Հայ Աւետ. Համաշխարհային Խորհուրդի

իրելի եղբայրներ եւ քոյրեր, կ'ողջունեմ ձեզ Քրիստոսի սուրբ անունով, Կը ցաւիմ որ կամքի անկախ պատձառներով, այսօր ձեզի հետ ըլլալու ուրախութիւնը պիտի չունենամ։ Բայց, վստահ եղեք որ հոգւով եւ աղօթքով ձեզի հետ եմ։

Անտարակոյս, պատմական անմոռանալի օր մըն է այսօր՝ երբ մեր Մայր Հայրենիքի մէջ հաւաքուած էք տօնելու՝ Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ հիմնադրութեան 175-ամեակը։ Անցեալ տարուան Յուլիս 1-ին պիտի տօնէինք այս տարեդարձը, բայց Պսակաձեւ համաձառակը հարկադրեց մեզ յետաձգելու մեր տօնակատարութիւնը՝ տարի մր ետք՝ այսօր։

Յուլիս 1, 1846-ին 37 այրեր եւ 3 կիներ հիմնեցին Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցին Իսթանպուլի Բերա թաղամասին մէջ։ Այդ թուականէն 4 տարիներ ետք, Նոյեմբեր 27, 1850-ին Օսմանեան Կայսրութեան Սուլթանը՝ Ապտուլ ՄեՃիտ պաշտօնական Ճանաչում շնորհեց նորակազմ Եկեղեցիին։

Ինչո՞ւ այդ 40-ր Մայր Եկեղեցիէն անջատուելով հիմնեցին Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցին։ Հարկ է յիշել թէ՝ Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին ծնունդ առաւ Առաքելական Եկեղեցւոլ ծոցին մէջ։ Անոր ծագումը սերտօրէն կապուած է բարեկարգութեան այն ձգտումներուն հետ, որոնք մերթ ընթ մերթ երեւան կու գային Հայց. Առաքելական Եկեղեցիին մէջ։ 19րդ դարուն Թրքահայոց մէջ տեղի ունեցող վերածնունդը՝ իր համատարած ազդեցութիւնով յեղաշրջում յառաջ բերաւ՝ անոր ոչ միայն քաղաքական, րնկերային եւ մշակութային մարզերու մէջ, այլ նաեւ պատրաստեց ենթահողը կրօնական եւ հոգեւոր զարթօնքի մր՝ Պատրիարքարանի հովանաւորուած րնծայարանին մէջ։ Առաջին հայ աւետարանականները Պոլսոլ ընծալարանի նախկին ուսանողներն էին։ Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցիի ծնունդը տեղի ունեցաւ Պոլսոլ Առաքելական Եկեղեցւոլ Աստուածաբանական դպրոցին մէջ։ Յետագային, ամերիկացի միսիոնարները այդ հողին վրայ աշխատեցան պարզապէս հոգեւոր լուսաւորութեան կենսական պէտքի մր գոհացում տալու համար։

Դիւրին չեղաւ ծնունդը Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիին։ Ցաւատանչ հոգեկան երկունքով ծնաւ ան։ Դիւրին չեղաւ նաեւ անոր մանկութիւնն ու պատանեկութիւնը։ Բազմաթիւ ու բազմապիսի արտաքին տագնապներ ցնցեցին անոր էութիւնը։ Ներքին տագնապներ ալ փոթորկեցին անոր ներաշխարհը։ Սակայն, ի հեձուկս այս ամէնուն, ան միշտ մնաց պատնէշի վրայ եւ շարունակեց իր առաքելութիւնը՝ միշտ բարիք եւ օրհնութիւն սփոելով իր շուրջը։

Երբ յետադարձ ակնարկ մը նետենք Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցւոյ 175-ամեակի կեանքին վրայ՝ Աստուծոյ փառք եւ երախտագիտութիւն կ'ընծայենք անոր մատուցած ծառայութիւններուն՝ հայ ազգի հոգեւոր, մշակութային, կրթական, ընկերային եւ հասարակական բնագաւառներուն մէջ։

Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին տարածուեցաւ աշխարհի զանազան ցամաքամասերու մէջ եւ իր եկեղեցիներով, Կիրակնօրեայ դպրոցներով պատանեկան, երիտասարդական միութիւններով, իր կրթական հաստատութիւններով, իր ձամբարներով եւ մամուլով՝ իր կենսական նպաստն ու ներդրումը ունեցաւ, եւ տակաւին կը շարունակէ ունենալ մեր ազգային կեանքին մէջ։

Առանց մանրամասնութեանց մէջ մտնելու՝ համառօտ կերպով յիշենք հետեւեալները։

- 1. Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին շեշտած է, եւ կր շարունակէ շեշտել, հոգեւոր վերածնունդի անհրաժեշտութիւնը, այսինքն Քրիստոսի աշակերտելու, քրիստոնեայ ըլլալու համար անհրաժեշտ է վերստին ծնիլ հոգեւոր փորձառութիւն ունենալ։ Այս հասկացողութեամբ ան ազգին տուած է հոգեւոր խոր գիտակցութեան տէր ընտիր սերունդներ։
- 2. Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին էական կը նկատէ քրիստոնէական դաստիարակութիւնը։ Վերստին ծնող անձ մը, պէտք է հոգեւորապէս մեծնայ։ Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին իրերայաջորդ քանի մը սերունդներու քրիստոնէական դաստիարակութիւն հայթայթած է։
- 3. Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին օրհնութեան աղբիւր մը հանդիսացած է կրթական մարզի մէջ՝ հայ ազգը օժտելով կրթական օձախներու լայն ցանցով մը եւ արտադրած է, եւ կը շարունակէ արտադրել, ուսեալ, բանիմաց եւ մտքով մշակուած սերունդներ։

Շարունակութիւնը էջ 41



# Յայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի Դատումներ եւ Դիտումներ

բ. ՄԱՍ

**Դոկտ- Երուանդ Հ. Քասունի**, պատմաբան, հեղինակ, եւ «Ձանասէր»ի նախկին խմբագիր

էորգ Մեսրոպ (1881—1948 թթ.) իր՝ «Պատմութիւն Հայ Եկեղեցւոյ» աշխատասիրութեան մէջ, «Հայ Բողոքականութիւնը» խորագրին ուակ, երկու ենթախորագրերով՝ «Հայ Բողոքականութեան Ծագումը» եւ «Մատթէոս Պատրիարքի Հալածանքը», գրեթէ բառացի կը վերարտադրէ Հրանտ Ասատուրի՝ պատմութեան նոյն անցուդարձերուն նուիրած էջերը, առանց նոր խօսք մը ըսելու փորձին(9)։ Սակայն «Հայ Բողոքականութեան Հալածանքին Ծագման Ու Դադարումին Պատճառները» խորագրով իր ամփոփած եզրայանգումը անաչառ պատմաբանի խօսք է, որ միաժամանակ դէպքերու հոլովոյթը համապարփակ սերտելու համար կարկինը աւելի լայն բանալ կը թելադրէ։ Պատճառները՝ հալածանքին.

«ա) Հայ Կաթոլիկութեան վէճերը եւ անոր պատճառով հայ հասարակութեան մէջ ծնած հոգեկան վիճակը առաջին տեղը կը բռնեն Բողոքականներու դէմ հանուած հայածանքին իբրեւ պատճառ։

«բ) Երկրորդ մեծագոյն պատճառը Հայ պատրիարքներու, առաջնորդներու եւ կղերականներու մոլեռանդութեան հասնող նախանձախնդրութիւնն էր։

- «գ) Հալածանքի բուն պատճառը միայն կղերը չէր անշուշտ։ Կար ուրիշ պատճառ մը, նոյնքան մոլեռանդ, նոյնքան զօրաւոր որ մինչեւ իսկ որոշ չափով գրգռիչն եղաւ կղերին. Ամիրայութիւնն էր ան։
- «դ) Արեւելքի քոյր ժողովուրդներու օրինակը։ Յոյն Եկեղեցին ու անոր պետերն ալ սոսկալի հալածանք հանած էին Քողոքականներուն դէմ։ Ատկէց պիտի ազդուէին անշուշտ Հայերը։
- «ե) Այս չորս կարեւոր պատճառներուն վրայ պէտք է աւելցնել նաեւ պետական քաջալերութիւնը։ Օսմանեան կառավարութիւնը ուզելով Եւրոպացւոց ապագայ միջամտութիւններէն խուսափիլ, հալածանք կը թելադրէր։
- «զ) Եւրոպական հակամարտ շահերը եւս մեծ տեղ կը բռնեն այս խնդրին մէջ։ Ռուսիա, Անգլիոյ եւ Ֆրանսայի հակառակ, կը թելադրէր Հայերը որ հալածեն Միսիոնարներն ու անոնց հետեւողները(10)։
- «է) Նոյնքան կարեւոր պատճառ մը պէտք է նկատել նաեւ միսիոնարներու եւ նորադարձ հայ բողոքականներու ծայրայեղութիւնները, արհամարհանգը դէպի ազգային սրբութիւնները եւն.:

«ը) Հայ հասարակութեան մեծագոյն խաւերուն խոր ագիտութիւնը եւս պէտք է դասել հալածանքի պատճառներուն մէջ։

«Իսկ հալածանքի դադարումին պատճառները ինքնին հասկնալի են. վերոյիշեալ պատճառները ինքնին երք սկսան վերջանալ, հալածանքն ալ դադրեցաւ։ Ազգային Սահմանադրութեան հաստատութիւնը, Ամիրայութեան անկումը, ազգային վերածնունդը, ազգային աւելի մեծ ցաւերը, Հայ եւ Հայ Բողոքական դպրոցները, համազգային ընկերակցութիւններ եւն. եւն. հետզհետէ մոռցուցին հին վէճերը եւ ուրախալի է որ այսօր լուրջ ձեռնարկներ կ'ըլան Ազգային Միութեան, ընդունելով կրօնական, խղճի ազատութիւնը»(11)։

Մաղաքիա Արք. Օրմանեան (1841 – 1918 թթ.) իր կոթողային աշխատասիրութեան՝ «Ազգապատում»ի Գ. հատորի թիւ 2589 եւ 2590 հատուածներով՝ «Մատթէոս Եւ Բողոքականք», «Բողոքական Հասարակութիւն» խորագիրներու տակ կ՝անդրադառնայ Պատրիարք-Պատրիարքարան եւ Հայ Աւետ. Շարժում յարաբերութեան եւ Օսմանեան Կայսրութեան մէջ Բողոքական Համայնքի օրինական կազմաւորումին։ Օրմանեան գլխաւորաբար իրեն աղբիւր ունի Աւետիս Պէրպէրեանն ու Հրանտ Ասատուրը, բայց բողոքական հասարակութեան մասին ունի իր խօսքը։

1847 թ. Նոյեմբերի 15-ին, սուլթանական հրովարտակով Օսմանեան Կայսրութեան Բողոքական Հասարակութիւնը «ինքնուրոյն հասարակութեան իրաւունք ստացաւ Բրոթեսթան միլլէթի պաշտօնական կոչմամբ»։ «Բրոթեսթան միլլէթին լոկ դաւանութեան վրայ հիմնուած է առանց ազգութեանց տարբերութեան, եւ բոլոր օսմանեան հպատակ բողոքականներ, ինչ ազգէ ալ ըլլան, միեւնոյն հասարակութեան կր պատկանին»(12)։

Պետական արձանագրութեանց տուեալներով այս բոլորը ճիշդ, բայց մինչեւ 1847 թ. Օրմանեան կրկնած էր Հրանտ Ասատուրի խօսքերը. Հայ Աւետարանականներէ «40 գլխաւորներ 1846 Յունիսին [(1 Յուլիսի, 1846 թ.)] ժողովի գումարուելով իրենք իրենց պաշտօնական ձեւ տուին, Կոստանդնուպոլսոյ առաջին աւետարանական եկեղեցին կազմեցին...»(13)։

Հրանտ Ասատուրի աշխատասիրութեան լոյսին գալէն տասնհինգ տարի ետք, Օրմանեանին տակաւի՞ն անծանօթ էր այն փաստը, որ երբ 1 Յուլիսի, 1846 թ., Հայ Աւետարանականներէ «40 գլխաւորներ» կազմաւորեցին իրենց եկեղեցին, միսիոնարներու հարցումին, թէ` «Դուք որ կը փափաքիք եկեղեցական կազմաւորութիւն առնուլ, այժմ, ի՞նչ յարանուանութիւն ընտրած էք կամ ո՞ր յարանուանութեան յարիլ որոշած էք»,

«Միաբանութիւնը կը պատասխանէ. Պէտք չունինք մասնաւոր նոր յարանուանութիւն մը որոշելու կամ որեւէ օտար դրութիւն կէտ առ կէտ որդեգրելու։ Մենք Մբ. Աւետարանին աշակերտած եւ անոր հոգեկեցոյց սկզբունքները արդէն որդեգրած ըլլալով՝ կը փափաքինք մեր մայրենի եկեղեցին իր նախկին առաքելական ուղղափառութեանն ու մաքուր պարզութեանը վերածել, վասն որոյ որոշած ենք Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի կազմուիլ եւ ո՛չ ուրիշ բան»(14)։

Ու երբ, 20 Նոյեմբերի, 1850 թ., Մեծն Բրիտանիոյ դեսպան Սըր Սթրաթֆորտ Գաննինկ նորակազմ Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի տասներկու ներկայացուցիչներուն կը յանձնէ Սուլթան Ապտուլ Մէճիտ Ա.ի (1839 – 1861 թթ.) 15 Նոյեմբերի, 1850 թուակիր կայսերական հրամանագիրը, «որ կը հաստատէր ժողովրդեան կազմակերպութիւնը իբրեւ ուրոյն քաղաքական ժողովուրդ, արտօնութեամբք համահաւասար ուրիշ ամէն հպատակ ազգաց եւ ժողովրդոց», ու հարց կու տայ.

«Հիմա որ դուք իբրեւ Օսմանեան մեծ տէրութեան հաւատարիմ հպատակներ կատարեալ ազատութիւն եւ անդորրութիւն պիտի վայելէք՝ ի՞նչ յարանուանութիւնով որոշած էք ճանչցուիլ Քրիստոնեայ Աշխարհին մէջ», ներկաները կը պատասխանեն.

«Մենք որեւէ յարանուանութիւն չենք ընդունած կամ անոր յարած, այլ միայն Աւետարանն ենք ընդունած եւ անոր ենք յարած, եւ ուստի որոշած ենք Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի անուամբ ճանչցուիլ Քրիստոնեայ Աշխարհին մէջ։

Դեսպան Գաննինկ.

«Այս պատուական ու չնաշխարհիկ անունէն երբեք մի բաժնուիք, եւ ջանացէք օր քան զօր աւելի համակերպիլ այդ պատուական անունին եւ իրօք ալ իւրացնել ձեզի»(15)։

Օրմանեանի համար պարզ չէ՞ր որ Օսմանեան Կայսրութեան Բողոքական Հասարակութեան Հայ «Բողոքական»ները մերժած էին Բողոքական յորջորջումը ու պաշտօնապէս յայտարարած թէ իրենք Հայաստանի Մայր Եկեղեցիի զաւակներ են, եւ իրենց կազմաւորած եկեղեցին որեւէ օտար յարանուանութեան հետ կապ չունի, այլ Հայ է, ազգային, եւ կը կոչուի Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի։

Բայցքանի որ Օրմանեան կառչած կը մնայ «Բողոքական» յորջորջումին, կ'եզրաբանէ. «Ոչ Բողոքականութիւնը ազգութիւն է, եւ ոչ ալ անոր կազմութիւնը ազգային է»(16)։ Ապա հարց պիտի տալ. Հայ Եկեղեցիի Առաքելականութիւնը՝ ազգութիւն է, թէ՝ Ուղղափառութիւնը, եւ այս երկուքէն որո՞ւն կազմութիւնը ազգային է։ Բայց երբ Առաքելական, Ուղղափառ Եկեղեցին Հայաստանեայց է, Առաքելականութիւնն ու Ուղղափառութիւնը ազգային տարազ կը հագնին։ Տարբեր չէ եւ չի կրնար ըլլալ Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին։ Ծնողք կ'որոշեն նորածինի անունը, ու նորածին

եկեղեցին կոչուած է Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական։ Բողոքականի ու Բողոքականութեան հարց չկայ։ Եւ ի՞նչ է տարբերութիւնը Առաքելական եւ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիին։ Առաքեալներըչե՞ն Աւետարանի «հեղինակ»ները, ու Աւետարանը չէ՞ որ կ՚ուսուցանէ Առաքեալներու ուսմունքը։

Ու համաշխարհային ճշմարտութիւն է.

Քրիստոնէութիւնը հայրենիք չունի, բայց ամէն հայրենիք իր Քրիստոնէութիւնը ունի։

Հայաստանեայց Առաքելական Եկեղեցին ու Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին մէկ հայրենիք ունին՝ Հայաստան։

Ցաջորդական երեր պետական, կայսերական հրամանագրերով, Օսմանեան Կայսրութեան Քողոքական Հասարակութիւնը՝ հայ, յոյն, ասորի, արաբ տարրերէ կացմուած, ուր հայերը ութսուն տոկոս կը կացմեն, օրինաւոր ճանաչում կր ստանալ Բրոթեսթան Միլլէթ անունով, որ կ'ունենալ իրեն լատուկ կանոնագրութիւնը՝ Բրոթեսթան Ճէմապթո Նիցամնամէսի(17) (Բողոքական Հասարակութեան Օրինագիրքը), եւ այդ օրինագիրքով սահմանուած Միլլէթ Վէրիլին։ Օրմանեանի համաձայն «Բրոթեսթան կամ բողո<u>բ</u>ական հասարակութեան պետին վէքիլ կոչումը, մեր մէջ սովորաբար ազգապետ անունով փոխանակուած է»18)։ Օրմանեանը լուգողը «ազգապետ» բառին առաջին արմատ՝ «ազգ» բառն է, քանի որ «Բողոքականութիւնը ազգութիւն չէ»(19)։ Սակայն Օրմանեան կ'անտեսէ այն փաստր, որ «ազգապետ»ը ուղղակի բառացի թարգմանութիւնն է պետութեան շնորհած «միլլեթ վեքիլի»ին։ Միլլեթ կր նշանակէ ազգ, ժողովուրդ, nation: «Հայկացնեան Լեզուի Բառարան»ը ազգ բառին հոմանիշ կր նշէ միլլէթ(21)։ Իսկ վէքիլ կր նշանակէ աթոռակալ, փոխանորդ, vicar, որ նշանակէ՝ ժողովրդապետ(22)։ Ուրեմն, «վէրիլ կոչումը» ոչ թէ «մեր մէջ սովորաբար ազգապետ անունով փոխանակուած է», այլ, պետութեան շնորհած օրինական միլլէթ վէքիլիի բառացի թարգմանութիւնն է։

Թէ ներկայ սերտողութիւնով մատնաշուած հեղինակներէն իւրաքանչիւրը, դատած իր ազգային ու պատմագիտական աշխարհայեացքէն ինչ վերաբերում կր զուցաբերէ Հայ Եկեղեցիի բարեկարգութիւնը պահանջող Հայ Աւետարանական Շարժումին հանդէպ, բացայայտ է իւրաքանչիւրին՝ հարցերը քննարկելու դիտանկիւնէն, ուր լանախ կանխորոշուած դատավնիռը կը փակէ արդար եզրայանգումի առաջնորդող անաչառ քննադատութեան թելադրած ուղին։ Հոս, հաւանաբար լայնախոհութիւն պիտի ցուցաբերել՝ լարգելով իւրաքանչիւր պատմագրողի՝ յանախ «մոլեռանդութեան հասնող» ազգային «նախանձախնդրութենէ» թելադրուող առաջ քաշած թեցերը, որոնք, դժբախտաբար, անկշոելի ամբաստանութիւններ են՝ «հերձուածողներ», «օտար պետութեանց աջակցութեամբ» ոտքի կեզողներ, «դրամ»ի ուժով հետեւորդ հաւաքողներ, «թեթեւամիտներ», «պառակտիչներ»...: Սակայն ինչ որ ըօղարկուած կր մնալ, բոլորին պահած լռութիւնն է 1 Յուլիսի, 1846 թ. Հայ Աւետ. Շարժումի քառասուն հաւատարիմներուն կազմաւորած եկեղեցիին կոչումին հանդէպ։ Քառասունները լայտարարեցին. «Որոշած ենք Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի կոչուիլ, եւ ոչ ուրիշ բան» (ընդգծումը մեր կողմէ, Ե.Հ.Ք.)։ Ու մեր դատումով, յարգելի պատմագրողները անհանգստացնողը նորակազմ եկեղեցիին կոչումն է, քանի որ այդ կոչումը՝ Հայաստանեայց Աւետարանական Եկեղեցի, ինքնին կը տապալէ իրենց առաջ բաշած թեցերը։

Սակայն, բարեբախտաբար, ժամանակը կլանող պատմութիւնը կը մնայ արդար դատաւոր, որուն վիճակուած է ըսելու վերջին խօսքը։ 2002 թ. Հայոց Քրիստոնէութեան դարձի 1700-ամեակի առիթով, Ամենայն Հայոց Կաթողիկոս Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ.Տ. Գարեգին Ք. Ներսիսեանի օրհնութեամբ լոյս տեսած «Քրիստոնեայ Հայաստան Հանրագիտարան»ը բծախնդիր գիտականութեամբ կու տայ Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի պատմութեան ուրուագիծը՝ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԵԱՅՑ ԱՐԵՏԱՐԱՆԱԿԱՆ ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻ խորագրի տակ։

#### ՄԱՏԵՆԱԳԻՏՈՒԹԻՒՆ

9 – Գեորգ Մեսրոպ, Պատմութիւն Յայ Եկեղեցւոյ, Կ. Պոլիս, 1913, էջ 514-518։

10 – 19-րդ դ. մեջ Յայկական Յարցը ներառող Արեւելեան Յարցի սրումը, որ առճակատումի կ'առաջնորդեր Մեծն Բրիտանիան եւ իր զինակիցները Ռուսիոյ դեմ, կը մղեր այս վերջինը պայքարելու` Օսմանեան Կայսրութիւն թափանգելու եւրոպական որեւէ միջոցառումի դէմ։

11 – ԳԷորգ Մեսրոպ, Պատմութիւն Յայ Եկեղեցւոյ, էջ 518-520։

12 – Մաղաբիա Արբ. Օրմանեան, Ազգապատում, Գ. հտր., Անթիլիաս, 2001, սիւնակ 3806։

13 – Նոյևը, սիւևակ 3805։

14 – Յ. Ստեփան Խ. Իւթիւճեան, Ծագումն Եւ Ընթացբ Աւետարանականութեան Ի Յայս, Կ. Պոլիս, 1914, էջ 167։

15 – Վեր. Յայկ Ստեփան Իւթիւճեան, Կենսագրութիւն Կամ Օրական Գրութիւն, Երուանդ Յ. Քասունի, «Քննական Տեսութիւն...», էջ 131-132։

16 – Մաղաբիա Արբ. Օրմանեան, Ազգապատում, Գ. հտր., սիւնակ 3807։

17 – Չենոբ Ա. ՊԷզճեան, Ազգապետարանի Տեղեկագիր 1913 Սեպտ. – 1922 Յուլիս Շրջանին Յամար, «Յամաժողով Յայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիներու, Յուլիս 5-10, 1922», Կ. Պոլիս, 1922, Էջ 34:

18 – Մաղաբիա Արբ. Օրմանեան, Ազգապատում, Գ. հտր., սիւնակ 3807։

19 – Նոյևր։

20 – A Pocket Dictionary of the Turkish, English and Armenian Languages, vol. 3, Venice, 1843. Յակոբոս Պոյաճեան, Բառարան Ի Տաճկականք Ի Դայ, Վիեննա, 1858: K.M. Vasif Onçugil, Yeni Turkçe-Ingilizçe Okul Lugati, Istanbul, 1962.

21 – Առձեռն Բառարան Յայկազնեան Լեզուի, Անթիլիաս, 1988։

22 – Յամառօտ Բառարան Ի Տաճկերէնէ Յանգղիական Եւ Ի Յայ Բարբառ, հտր. Գ., Վենետիկ, 1843: A Pocket Dictionary of the English, Armenian and Turkish Languages, vol. 1, Venice, 1843.

# Շարունակութիւն էջ 38էն...

4. Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին օրհնութեան աղբիւր մը դարձած է հայ ազգին՝ իր բարեգործական, մարդասիրական եւ աւետարանչական առաքելութեամբ եւ վաստակով։

5. Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին օրհնութեան աղբիւր մը եղած է մշակութային ներդրումով — իր մամուլով, իր բազմաթիւ հարատարակութիւններով եւ գեղարուեստական այլազան ձեռնարկներով։

6. Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին օրհնութեան աղբիւր մը դարձած է հայ ազգին իր նուիրած ընտիր մտաւորականներով, եկեղեցականներով եւ աշխարհականներով, որոնք սատարած են մեր ազգային վերելքին։

Այո՛, երբ այսօր յետադարձ հայեացքով մեր անցեալին նայինք, Աստոծոյ փառք տալիք շատ պատձառներ ունինք՝ Հայ Աւետ. Եկեղեցւոյ ծառայութիւններուն եւ ազգային կեանքի ներդրումին համար։

Բայց յոբելենական հանգրուաններուն՝ մենք մեր հայեացքը միայն դէպի անցեալը ուղղելու չենք, այլ նաեւ դէպի ապագան։ Ես կր հաւատամ որ 175 տարիներ առաջ մեր նախահայրերը հիմնեցին Հայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցին՝ հոգեւորապէս լուսաւորելու համար Հայ եկեղեցին եւ մեր ազգի լայն զանգուածները։ Մեր սրբազան աւանդն է պահել, հաւատքի այդ ջահը եւ ապա անցնել գալիք սերունդներուն։ Մեր կոչումն է սիրոյ եւ փրկութեան Աւետարանի ջահակիրները ըլլալ։

Հայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին պէտք է յարատեւ հաւատարիմ մնայ Եկեղեցւոյ Տիրոջ, Յիսուս Քրիստոսի եւ պէտք է Աւետարանի Ճշմարտութիւնները ապրող եւ շեփորող եկեղեցի մր րլլայ։

Ան իր Աւետարանական անունին վայել օրհնութեան մշտահոս աղբիւր մը դառնալու է, ի փառս Աստուծոյ, ի պայծառութիւն Քրիստոսի սուրբ եւ ընդհանրական Եկեղեցիին եւ յօգուտ մեր ազգին եւ մարդկութեան։ Ամէն եւ Ամէն։

\*Սոյն ուղերձը երիզով ներկայացուեցաւ Յայց. Աւետ. Եկեղեցւոյ 175-ամեակի Յոբելենական տօնակատարութեան առթիւ, Յուլիս 2, 2022-ին, Երեւանի Յայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեգւոյ մեջ։

# Promoting Peace in a Post-Pandemic World

he idea of a BIBLICAL PASSPORT came to me

By Dr. Carnegie Calian\*

as I was examining my updated U.S. passport at home.

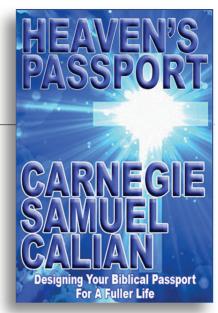
My bookshelf held a variety of Bible translations I have found useful in my Scripture studies. It was then that I envisioned having my own biblical passport, highlighting some favorite scriptural quotations that continue to be inspirational for me in my travels as a volunteer chaplain for the Holland America cruise line following my retirement from Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. My biblical passport as I envisioned it, would be brief in content, enabling me to commit basic points to memory for easy use when appropriate in the course of my conversations, expressing guidelines and values that could be useful to others I met at home and around the world.

The following is a seven-point model of my biblical passport for my traveling use in getting acquainted and building trust during encounters with new people. This practice of goodwill can be applied today wherever CO-VID-19 has hit a community unexpectedly, and advances hope and trust rapidly in the midst of our doubts and ignorance of what is best in various situations. Everyone is fearful of a seemingly unending pandemic, ill equipped, along with religious and political biases, to decipher the continuing scientific research which beckons us to become learners in God's universe of constant change.

We are now facing a post-pandemic period, which is a good time to design one's biblical passport to build trust among ourselves, discovering anew that all humanity is created in God's image, whatever one's language, color, and culture might be. The windows of heaven are open to us again, making us realize how much we have dehumanized others in the past with unforgiving wars, blaming others for our shortcomings. Those who have survived among believers and seekers have at times denied God's grace in their midst due to limited teachings and resources, causing them to adopt narrow pathways, not fully appreciating what it means to be created in the *imago Dei*. We must care for others as soulmates, working as a team to promote the abundance inherent in creation for the glory of

our Creator-God who loves us in spite of our unfaithfulness.

With these above observations in mind, let us encourage diverse group discussions within our communities as they construct together our respective biblical



passports to enhance faithful stewardship before our Creator-God. A biblical passport should fulfill us emotionally and spiritually. Let us renew our lives together for a fuller life in peace, practicing forgiving love that reveals the kindness and humility within us as described in Micah 6:8 and throughout the many stories found in our sacred texts.

- 1. Start your day right (Psalm 139:23-24). My biblical passport begins with this prayer: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting." This is my morning prayer. My quiet time also includes scriptural readings, reflections, and thanksgiving to God for another day of grace, whatever the weather might be. New Revised Standard Version
- 2. Treat individuals as sacred (Galatians 5:6). Getting acquainted with strangers is an essential first step in developing partnerships and discovering values that are shared, even if they're expressed differently and influenced by different backgrounds. I find it interesting to learn about other cultures. We are called to nurture and enjoy not only our families and friends but also to enrich our circle of fellowship to include strangers and even those who are our competitors and enemies. Otherwise, what real chance have we for lasting peace, prosperity, or justice as a global community? Paul's Letter to the Galatians often referred to as the Magna Carta of Christian Liberty reminds us that in Christ, "Neither circumcision nor uncircumci-

sion avails anything, but faith working through love." *King James Version* 

3. Be generous (Acts 4:32 – 5:11) In the Acts of the Apostles, we learn that the early community of believers was strengthened and grew through its spirit of generosity. Property and other possessions were given to the community to sell, and the general funds distributed according to each member's need. Commitment to one's "biblical passport" will promote generosity and a willingness to meet community responsibilities. The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language

4. Practice moderation (Galatians 5:22-23) It can be said that we are as ethical as the last time we were tempted. None of us is immune. Obsession in its many forms seems to trump our best intentions. However, when we reflect on the importance of moderation, as Scripture encourages us to do, we find ourselves tasting the fruit of the Spirit – "love, joy, peace, patience, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

New Revised Standard Version

5. Disclose mistakes (Mark 4:22-28) Confession and restitution are necessary to restore ethical character in the global community. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus warned His disciples, "For there is nothing hidden but it must be disclosed; nothing kept secret except to be brought to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen to this." The Jerusalem Bible

- 6. Speak briefly and act wisely (I Kings 3:27-28) Lies are endemic to our lives, even etiquette fosters deceit in our relationships. Speaking the truth is an effort to do the right thing by all persons involved. To act wisely in delicate matters affecting the lives of others requires that leaders stay well informed and act on facts, not rumor or anger. Having all the evidence may be impossible, but we are obligated to maximize our knowledge as a prerequisite for coming to a just judgment. In the days of King Solomon, two women fought over a baby, each claiming to be the child's mother. Who was telling the truth? Solomon listened silently. Then he asked for a sword and ordered the baby cut in two, so half could be given to each woman. The true mother, loving the child too much to see it killed, pleaded with the king to give the baby to the other woman. And then Solomon said, "Give the living baby to the first woman; do not kill it. She is its mother." And the people of Israel saw that their king had divine wisdom and the ability to administer justice. The New English Bible
- 7. Don't quit on God, others, or yourself. (Psalm 138) When the waters of life are stormy, we have the scary feeling that perhaps God is absent. Enroute to Antarctica on an educational trip, my wife and I were sitting in the ship's library. I was preparing the next day's worship service as one of the chaplains when we saw

two 80-foot waves strike the ship. Library books fell, and tables were overturned. It was indeed a frightening experience. The ship was like a cork surrounded by high waves as the dedicated captain and crew made every effort to head back to port some distance away. Amid the anxiety and fear, many found themselves praying. The next day after calm set in, we experienced an overflowing worship service in the ship's theater to everyone's joy. The "Easter Crowd" was back at church. For a moment, we had the passing thought that God had quit on us.

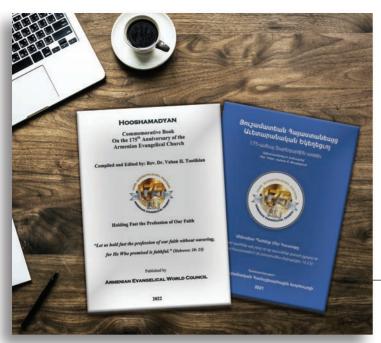
We may have neighbors and family members who feel that way today with their economic fears, job concerns, poverty, and health issues including the loss of loved ones from the coronavirus pandemic as well as our continued gun endemic. When I was ten years old, finances were tight for my Armenian immigrant parents trying to make ends meet in America, where my sister and I were born. Hope seemed far away. Then one day, returning to our rented flat, I found a large, unmarked package outside the door. I asked our neighbors, but no one expected any package. For some time, we kept thinking someone would claim it. Eventually, we opened it and saw that it was a large, family Bible. We took it as a divine sign of hope and love that lifted our spirits. God had not quit on us. The underlying question in life, however, remains for all of us: How faithful will we be when tested to serve God, others, or ourselves first? What will our actual priorities be under pressure?

My model of a biblical passport closes with an abiding note of comfort in the midst of many unanswered questions; namely, to begin and end each day in a spirit of thanksgiving to God, reminding ourselves that we live by divine grace surrounded by loving relationships — divine and human —revealed to us in surprising ways. These spiritual realities of faith enable us to face our journeys in life *empowered not to quit on God, others, or ourselves* when tempted.

This is why the psalmist in Scripture prays to God so powerfully: "When I walk into the thick of trouble, keep me alive in the angry turmoil. With one hand strike my foes; with your other hand, save me. Finish what you started in me, God. Your love is eternal – don't quit on me now." Psalm 138:7-8, The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language, translated by Eugene Peterson.



\* **Dr. Carnegie Calian** is President Emeritus and Professor at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. The title of his latest book is *Heaven's Passport for a Fuller Life on Earth*, available at Amazon. com is designed for group discussions.



# Hooshamadyan's English Edition is Published

By Rev. Serop Megerditchian\*

he Armenian Christian Heritage Committee (ACHC) of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) announces with joy the publication of the English edition of the *Hooshamadyan: Commemo-*

rative Book on the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church compiled and edited by Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian.

Hooshamadyan was first published in Armenian in Yerevan, Armenia in 2021, on the occasion of the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church. This milestone was to be celebrated in Armenia last year, but was postponed to July 1-10, 2022, because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Hooshamadyan is the modern history of the Armenian Evangelical Church (AEC). In the words of the editor, Rev. Dr. Tootikian, "It depicts the highlights of the Armenian Evangelical Church and presents a panoramic view, utilizing important primary and secondary sources."

This Commemorative Book, on the 175<sup>th</sup> AEC consists of three parts: A brief history of AEC, Church Unions and Organizations of the Armenian Evangelical Church (AEC), and an Appendix.

Part I consists of 6 chapters and 85 pages, in which Rev. Dr. Tootikian presents a brief history of AEC—its rise, the formation of the Church Unions and missionary/philanthropic organizations, the Armenian Evangelical World Council, the doctrines and theology of AEC and the benefits and contributions of AEC to the Armenian nation.

Part II consists of 8 chapters and 158 pages and deals with the history of AEC Unions and Organizations. They come under the umbrella of an ecclesiastical representative body called Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC).

At the present time, AEWC is composed of the following five Church Unions and two missionary/philanthropic organizations: Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of France, Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Eurasia, Evangelical Church of Armenia, Armenian Missionary Association of America, and Stephen Philibosian Foundation. In the *Hooshamadyan*, each of these Unions and organizations is meticulously researched. A great deal of current information is presented along with older history, and both blend together to make this volume an excellent resource.

Part III is the Appendix, which lists the 40 founding members of AEC and the English translation of Sultan Abdul-Mejid's Firman (decree), issued in 1850, officially recognizing the Protestant Church in the Ottoman Empire.

Hooshamadyan is a labor of love by so many contributors from all around the world, including the members of the Armenian Christian Heritage Committee (ACHC) of AEUNA, which embarked upon its publication and assisted in its translation work. Indeed, those who contributed articles, revised, edited, and typed the content of this volume deserve our thanks and appreciation. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Armenian Missionary Association of America for taking care of the entire cost of the publication.

Finally, many thanks to Rev. Dr. Tootikian for his astute scholarship and dedicated services in compiling and editing such a rich resource for all who want to be better acquainted with the Armenian Evangelical Church.

Hooshamadyan: Commemorative Book on the 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church may be obtained from the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, 411 East Acacia Avenue, Suite 200, Glendale, CA 91205-0922; or Armenian Missionary Association of America, 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652.

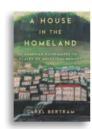


\* Rev. Serop Megerditchian is the Senior Pastor of Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church of Pasadena, CA and the Vice Moderator of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America.

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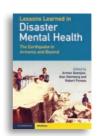
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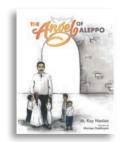
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# **Elaine Kasparian** (Former AMAA Board Member and Founding Member and Chair of AMAA's Armenian Children's Milk Fund Program)

October 16, 1936 - November 13, 2022

laine Armine Kasparian of Belmont, MA, former AMAA Board member and the founding Chair of AMAA's Armenian Children's Milk Fund Program, passed away peacefully on November 13, 2022, surrounded by her three children. She was 86. Born in Boston, MA on October 16, 1936, Elaine was the daughter of the late Dr. Gaspard M. Garoyan and Nevart (Avedissian) Garoyan. She was the sister of the late Annabelle (Garoyan) Terzian and the late R. Diana (Garoyan) Monaco. She was married to the late Dr. Frank Kasparian, and following his passing, the late Dr. Robert (Bob) Watson.

Elaine was a proud graduate of Belmont High School (Class of 1954), and Tufts University (Class of 1958), where she majored in drama. Elaine spent much of her life advocating for the University, serving as President of the Boston Tufts Alliance and later as a member of the development team. Struck by the tragedy surrounding the Armenian earthquake of 1988, Elaine was single-minded in her determination to do something to help. She worked with friends to co-found the AMAA's Armenian Children's Milk Fund, raising funds to purchase life sustaining infant formula and milk for at-risk children in Armenia. The Fund has raised several million dollars, \$750,000 in the first year alone.



A devoted thespian, Elaine directed plays with many community theaters, including the Belmont Dramatic Club and Arlington Friends of the Drama. Elaine also developed programs in creative dramatics for children in schools across the greater Boston area. Elaine treasured her family. She was invested in the lives of her children and grandchildren and never missed any of their sporting events or concerts.

She is survived by her children, Faith Kasparian (Erik Weisman), Dr. Joy Kasparian-Federico (Richard Federico), and Christian Kasparian (Laura); and grandchildren, Frank Kasparian Weisman, Ethan Kasparian Weisman, Richard Federico III, Christian Federico, Elsbeth Kasparian, and CJ Kasparian; as well as Bob's children, Beth Allen (Rob), Bret Watson (Sheryl), Dr. Brad Watson (Wendy), and J.P. Watson (Caroline); and grandchildren, Chelsey Allen (Joseph Hoyt), Abbey Allen, Brock Allen, Max Watson, Lilly Watson, Charles Henry Watson, Carly Watson, Jackson Watson, Rebecca Watson, and Sarah Elizabeth Watson.



One of the latest beneficiaries of Armenian Children's Milk Fund.

Elaine was one to always open doors and loved bringing people together. She will be most remembered for her compassion, generosity, boundless enthusiasm, creative vision, and the dynamic force with which she celebrated life.

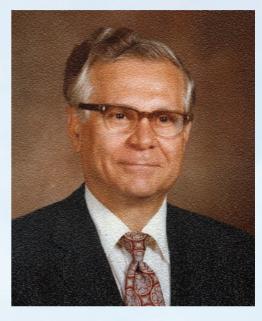
A funeral service was held November 21 at Plymouth Congregational Church in Belmont.

"It takes foresight, boldness and initiative to make history," said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO. "Elaine Kasparian was the architect who said, 'we can do it' and the AMAA's Armenian Children's Milk Fund program is in its 33<sup>rd</sup> year and going strong. Thousands of Armenian children can graciously cry out 'thank you Elaine.' We wholeheartedly join them. May God bless her memory and may she rest in peace," he added.

# George Bezirganian, M.D. (Former AMAA President and Board Member)

February 4, 1928 - November 18, 2022

r. George Bezirganian of Falls Church, VA, former AMAA President and Board member, went home to be with the Lord on November 18, 2022, surrounded by his family. He was 94. Born in Beirut, Lebanon on February 4, 1928, to Ohannes and Anna (Kelleyan) Bezirganian, Dr. George Bezirganian attended the Armenian Evangelical Elementary School of Nor Marash, Bourj Hammoud and the Armenian Evangelical College of Beirut before receiving his MD degree at the American University of Beirut in 1953. For five years he served as a Staff Physician in three different hospitals: the Christian Medical Center in Beirut; the Southern Baptist Mission Hospital in Ajloun, Jordan; and the Presbyterian Mission Hospital in Tripoli, Lebanon. He met nursing instructor Mary Pauline Bezirganian (no relation) in Ajloun; they married in 1958 and subsequently emigrated to the United States. He completed an internship in Chicago followed by a residency at the Buffalo Psychiatric Center. From 1963 until his retirement in 1991 and move to Falls Church, VA, he practiced psychiatry at the Middletown, NY Psychiatric Center—rapidly rising to the position of Deputy Clinical Director. He served as President of the West Hudson District Branch of



the American Psychiatric Association in 1968. The Bezirganians raised three children in Middletown, NY: John, a psychiatrist in Ithaca, NY; Carol, a psychiatrist in Fairfax, VA; and Steve, an International Trade Analyst at U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Dr. Bezirganian became involved in the Armenian Missionary Association of America in 1960 during Reverend Edward S. Tovmassian's tenure as Executive Director.

Over the ensuing years, he participated in the Personnel, Bylaws, Finance, and Executive Committees, completed numerous terms on the Board of Directors, and served as Vice President in 1960-61 during Rev. Dr. Dicran Y. Kassouny's Presidency. During Dr. Bezirganian's first presidential term (1982-84), the Armenian Missionary Association of Canada was established. During his second term (1987-88), Rev. Dr. Guiragos H. Chopourian retired after 18 years of dedicated service as Executive Director and was succeeded by Rev. Dr. Movses B. Janbazian. In 1989, he went to Armenia to participate in AMAA relief efforts after the catastrophic earthquake of 1988.

While living in Middletown, Dr. Bezirganian was a member of the Armenian Presbyterian Church in Paramus, NJ. Upon his move to Virginia, he attended the Washington, D.C. Armenian Fellowship as well as the Capital Baptist Church where, until the pandemic, he actively participated in weekly Bible studies. During his retirement, he spent joyful time with his grandchildren (Allie and Nick Perez and Simon and Andrew Bezirganian), as well as watching soccer and listening to his beloved hymns.

He is predeceased by his brother Sarkis and his sister, Marie Manougian, and is survived by his wife Mary Pauline, his children and grandchildren, and his sister Sirarpie Hagopian, as well as many nieces, nephews, and cousins. He will be greatly missed, but in the words of his favorite hymn, "In the sweet by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore."

The funeral service was held on November 23, 2022, and a Celebration of Life will be held in the spring. Memorial donations can be made to the AMAA or the Capital Baptist Church in Annandale, VA.

"AMAA is founded on the shoulders of visionary believers who braced its shores with faith and toiled hard to raise the walls on solid rock. AMAA praises God for the life of its long-time Board member and past President, George Bezirganian, whose legacy of love, faith and service will ever be remembered," said Zaven Khanjian, AMAA Executive Director/CEO.

# **Obituaries**

## John Ahmaranian

John (Hovhanness) Ahmaranian of Pasadena, CA passed away on October 28, 2022, at the age of 76.

Born November 12, 1945, John was the son of George and Atiya Ahmaranian.



Soon after, his brothers Raymond, Pierre and Michel followed. John was a very bright and active boy with a sharp inquisitive mind. His parents enrolled him at the Bzemmar School where he received his high school diploma. He then moved to Italy where he received his bachelor's degree in Theology from the Pontifical Gregoriana University followed by a master's degree in Philosophy from the prestigious Sorbonne University in France. He continued his studies receiving his first Ph.D. in Muslim Studies at the University of Cairo and a second Ph.D. in Middle Eastern Studies at the National Academy of Yerevan.

Among his friends and hundreds of students, John was known as the "walking and talking" encyclopedia. He is the author of more than 25 books in five different languages.

He was also the recipient of several awards including one from President Anwar Sadat for his book titled "Muslim Christian Dialogue," the Lebanese Journalist of the Year award from The World Lebanese Cultural Union, Teacher of the Year award from Armenian Alumni Association of Los Angeles, and the Overseas Lebanese Author of the Year award from the Lebanese Armed Forces.

John taught at various institutions including the US Marines Corps at Camp Pendleton, the Emmanuel Bible College in both Pasadena and Yerevan, the AMAA's Evangelical Theological Academy of Armenia, and the Holy See of Etchmiadzin of which he was most proud.

John had a brilliant mind, which overflowed with knowledge. He was a teacher but never stopped being a student. He read, researched, and dug deep in every subject he taught and every book he wrote. He spent most of his waking hours and often his nights writing, reading, and praying. He was a Godly man and a very humble man. When someone addressed him as Dr. Ahmaranian, he would immediately correct him and say, my name is Hovhannes.

Once you met John, you were never the same. His love of God ran deep in his

Armenian veins followed by his infatuation with Armenia and its people. The moment he stepped foot in Armenia in the early 90s, he was smitten. The exhilaration he felt when he first set eyes on Mount Ararat never diminished even after 18 trips back to his beloved Homeland.

During his three weeks of hospitalization, his wife Seta and his childhood friend Harout Ghazarian were at his bedside every day. Harout would read from St. Nareg's prayer book while John would recite the prayers faster than Harout could read. Even though his body was failing quite rapidly, he never lost his state of mind and he prayed continuously and asked everyone who visited him to do the same. Seta also made sure he stayed connected with his three brothers by face timing with them every single day.

Funeral services took place November 5 at St. Gregory Armenian Catholic Church in Glendale, CA.

### Bedros Alahaidoyan

Bedros Alahaidoyan, artist, musicologist, folklorist, researcher, and friend of Lark Musical Society, passed away on September 11, 2022, in Glendale, CA. He was 87. He was one of the pillars of



Armenian Diasporan musicology and devoted himself to collecting and preserving Armenian folk songs.

He was born in Beirut, Lebanon November 29, 1934 to Armenian parents, father Hovsep Alahaidoyan, a renowned Pharmacist from Urfa who established his Pharmacy in Beirut in 1923, and his mother Pergroohi Sahagian, a Genocide survivor from Cayseri.

Bedros attended Djemaran where he acquired his academic education and studied violin in the local conservatory while a member of Kousan choral group directed by Parsegh Ganatchian, who was the gifted student of the great Gomidas. Bedros received his higher education in Belgium graduating as a pharmacist after which he joined his father working in the pharmacy in Beirut. After a few years he returned to Belgium for his musicology degree.

From 1977-94 he served on the staff of Belgian National Radio and Television where he occasionally was able to introduce Armenian Classical music, particularly the works of Gomidas, to the public. From 1985-95, he pursued his passion of preserving the Armenian cultural heritage, by visiting various countries and Armenian communities including retirement homes and convalescent hospitals where he found and interviewed survivors of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and recorded their experiences and recollections.

He met his wife Violette at Ararat Convalescent Hospital in Eagle Rock while he visited the elderly residing there. They were married April 3, 1993. Bedros moved to Glendale, CA in 1994 where he wrote music reviews for the Armenian Press and gave lectures on his project, while working on his collection for publication.

In 2020, he donated his archival collection to the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia – Institute of Arts, and UCLA's Armenian Music Program, where they are being digitized and preserved. Bedros, relentlessly and selflessly dedicated his all to the preservation of Armenian treasures.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his son Hovig and his wife Simona, their son Tomas, and his two younger sisters Hasmig Merguerian and Roubina Artinian.

## George Berberian

George (Kevork) Berberian of Miami, FL passed away after a brief illness on August 13, 2022. He was 93 years old.



George was born in Azaz, Syria to Rev. Assadour and Serpou-

hie Berberian on January 27, 1929. He outlived all his immediate family members, including his father, a minister of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Azaz, his mother who emigrated to Canada, older brother Berg, a violinist in the Miami Symphony Orchestra, sister Berjouhie (brother-in-law Walter Callway), who emigrated to Canada and was a teacher in Dundas, Canada, and younger brother Vahe, a music composer in Washington, D.C.

George emigrated to the United States after graduating from Aleppo College in Syria. He continued his education in Washington, D.C. and served in the U.S. Army. After he retired from the Army, he started working for National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). When NOAA moved to Miami, FL he and his wife Ann moved to Miami and George

became an expert in the analysis of ocean water. He was the Deputy Director of the NOAA Ocean Chemistry Laboratory/ Atlantic Oceanographic & Meteorological Laboratory when he retired in 1994. After retirement, he continued to work as a consultant for NOAA through the University of Miami until a few months before his death. In his honor, NOAA named one of their ships GBN1 [George Berberian Number 1]. He loved to go on long boat trips analyzing the ocean water. He also loved classical music, was President of the Miami Chopin Society, arranged yearly piano competitions, and was an active member of the Miami Bach Society.

His wife Ann, a Delta Airline employee, died several decades ago in Miami. During the past decades his partner was Linda Smoak of Miami. Various family members now reside in the U.S. and Canada. His sister's children, Edward Callway (Madeline) lives in Toronto, Canada, and Dr. Caroline Preston (Jon) lives in Victoria, Canada. His brother Vahe's widow, Pauline Berberian, now lives in St. Charles, IL. He was very close to his cousin's family, Drs. Vasken and Sharon Hagopian in Tallahassee, FL, their son Ara of Pine Island, FL, and sisters Dr. Arpi Hagopian in Lansdale, PA and Lily Hagopian Brod in Pacific Palisades, CA.

A memorial, arranged by Linda Smoak and Leatrice and Dr. Alfred Damus, was held September 18, 2022, in Plymouth Congregational Church, Coconut Grove, FL. Donations may be made in his memory to the Armenian Missionary Association of America.

#### Anna Orchanian Boujikiann

Anna Orchanian Boujikian of Toronto, ON, Canada passed away on October 3, 2022.

Wife of the late Antoine Boujikian, she was a devout Christian, committed wife, loving



 $mother, seam stress, and \ philanthropist.$ 

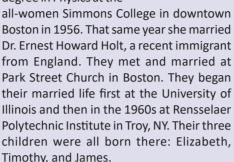
Anna had been active in both the Armenian Catholic and Brotherhood communities in Toronto. She actively served the church in many ways.

Anna is survived by her four children Seta, Silva, Benjamin, and Steve, brother Samuel and sisters Haygouhie Marandjian, the wife of AMAC Board member Sarkis Marandjian, and Nver.

#### Lois Anne Holt

Lois Anne Holt passed on to her eternal life on October 15, 2022, in El Paso, TX. She was 88.

Born in Boston, MA, on August 29, 1934, she earned a degree in Physics at the



Due to Lois's struggling lung health, the family moved to the dry, warm climate of El Paso in 1968. When she felt the El Paso sun at that time, "She knew she would make it." Lois's primary passion was raising her three children and being the rock of the family household, and that she was for her 54 years in El Paso.

Her second greatest passion was music, and she was church organist for many decades at several area churches including First Presbyterian Church and Center Chapel One on Ft. Bliss. She gave organ recitals over the years and played at funerals for many, from privates to generals. She loved plants and gardening, several Dachshunds over the years, all things British, and her love of and hope in Jesus Christ. In her last years, she lived a simple but satisfied life at home right to the end of her life, being sustained by her three children.

She is survived by her brother David; her three children; and three grandchildren Anna (Dawson), Jeffrey, and Jenna. Her husband of 59 years, Howard, preceded her in 2015.

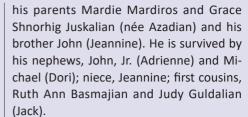
Funeral services were held November 1, 2022, at the Church of St. Clement, El Paso. Donations may be made to the AMAA.

#### Mardie Juskalian

Mardie Juskalian of Warrington, PA, a former AMAA Board member, passed away on October 4, 2022. He was 89.

Mardie was preceded in death by





A memorial service was held Saturday, October 15, 2022, at Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church, Havertown, PA. A private burial will be held at another time. Memorial donations may be made in memory of Mardie to the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church.

His church community knew, admired, and loved Mardie as a gentle, easy-to-bewith soul, as someone who never complained, as a wise financial investor, and as a dance enthusiast. He will be missed.

## Lydia Vahram Khounganian

Lydia Khounganian passed away in Alexandria, Egypt on August 7, 2022. She was 71.

Born on October 27, 1950 in Alexandria to Rev. Vahram and Satenig Khounganian,



she attended Boghossian Armenian School and later continued her education at the Scottish School for Girls. She earned her bachelor of arts degree in English Literature and another degree in Applied Linguistics. Lydia taught English at Boghossian Armenian School and later taught at the British Counsil.

She was the pianist/organist at the Armenian Evangelical Church, Alexandria Community Church, Church of God, the Angelican Church and the German Church. For almost 40 years. She also conducted Christmas choirs at St. Marc College and the Anglican Church.

She loved the Lord and served Him with all her heart. She was active at her Church leading Sunday School and Ladies Bible Study. She spread God's word by giving away "Upper Room" devotionals and Zhatz Mer Hanabazort (Armenian version of Our Daily Bread devotional booklets published by AMAA) door to door. The last 10 years she looked after her mother with love and devotion.

The city of Alexandria lost a devoted servant of God.

#### Samuel Yervant Kutchukian

Samuel Yervant Kutchukian of Elmira, NY, AMAA supporter and a sponsor of the Child Sponsorship Program, passed away at home on April 5, 2022. He was 84.



Sam was born October 11, 1937 in Alexandria, Egypt to Yervant and Elise (Melkonian) Kutchukian, both of whom predeceased him. The youngest of three children, Sam was also predeceased by brother Armenak Kutchukian and survived by sister Sylvia Kutchukian. He attended The British Boys School, where his love for soccer and sports began. Sam graduated in 1955 and began studies at The American University in Beirut. He also attended Mission Commercial (1955-1956) and Haigazian College (1956-1958).

Sam emigrated to the United States, by ship, arriving in California on September 15, 1958. He later recalled this as the "best day of his life...free at last." In California, he continued his studies at Pepperdine University, which was "the only college at the time who accepted foreigners."

He settled in Rochester, NY where he worked at Taylor Instruments and later graduated from Roberts Wesleyan College. His next stop was Elmira, NY where he began his teaching career in 1964 as a French teacher at Elmira Free Academy. This was also the year he requested permission to introduce the sport of soccer to the young men at EFA. Over the course of 34 years, he compiled a 341-154-19 record as head coach. In 1976 he also began coaching tennis, compiling a 263-86 record. Through the course of his teaching and coaching career. Sam touched the lives of countless students, players, families, and friends. He led by example, leaving behind lessons of life and living with a good heart and sense of humor.

Sam lived with integrity and kindness at the forefront. He was a deeply spiritual man who turned to the Bible as his "favorite book." Sam loved his family wholeheartedly and lived to enjoy his children, grandchildren and great- grandchildren. He loved playing golf, following sports, and enjoying the company of family and friends.

Sam is survived by his wife Margaret "Peg" Kutchukian; daughters Anne (Tim Hartman) and Jane (Don Knolles); grandchildren Alyssa (Jake Youngman), Meagan (Kim Davenport), Eric, Jake (Brooke

Davenport), TJ, Molly, Bridget and Madison; great-grandchildren Jane, Declan, Otto, Ainsley, Mia and Camden; niece Joy Walsh and nephews Yervant and Peter Kutchukian.

Funeral services were held April 15, 2022.

## Stephen Stepanian

Stephen Stepanian of Needham, MA formerly of Lexington, passed away on September 29, 2022.

Born in Aleppo, Syria, Stephen was the son of Armenian Genocide survivors



Antranig and Asghig Stepanian, originally from Dikranagerd. Speaking five languages, Steve was culturally rich and ambitious. His immigration to the U.S. in 1955 changed his life and the lives of the family members who followed. Within six months, he met and married Esther Sarmanian, daughter of Haroutiun and Lousapar, also Genocide survivors from Marash. Steve worked hard to build a life and family.

In 1964, he joined Printed Circuit Corporation as its accounting manager. Steadily advancing, Steve ultimately became President of the company and helped it grow from 22 to 500 employees.

During this time, Steve's family also grew. He and his wife raised three daughters and a son. Together they enjoyed traveling and spending summers in Wolfeboro, NH. Throughout his life, Steve carried an active love for Armenia, fostering children, supporting several initiatives in the Homeland, and pursuing justice for Armenia. He governed his home with this love and dedication.

He was the beloved husband of Esther; father of Andrea Southard and her husband Ken; Lisa Stepanian and her husband Robert; Stephanie Stepanian and her husband Tom; and the late Paul Stepanian and his wife Julie. Loving grandfather of Rachel Jackson; Daniel Farrohi and his wife Tanya; Alexandra Farrohi; Ella and Paul Stepanian. Brother of Marie Kouyoumjian, (Karnig); Rev. Aram Stepanian, (Margaret); Margo Kozelian (Arsen) and Koko Stepanian, (Armine). Brother-in-law of JoAnn and Dick Janjigian, the late Peter and Agnes Sarmanian, and Sandy and the late Hagop Sarmanian. Also survived by many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Funeral services were held on October 4, 2022, at St. James Armenian Church in Watertown, MA followed by interment at Mount Auburn Cemetery, Cambridge.

Memorial donations are designated for AMAA Orphan and Child Care Program, St. James Armenian Church, or The Armenian Church of the Holy Translators.

The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends.

Virginia Abajian – Los Angeles, CA

\* Queenie Teshkhouie Amoghlian – Thousand Oaks, CA

**Aram Davidian** – *Pasadena*, *CA* 

- \* Dorothy Gulezian Brockton, MA
- \* Yevnig Heghinian Watertown, MA

Sivart Hintlian – Pasadena, CA

Arpiar Janoyan – Van Nuys, CA

Avedis Khachadurian – Princeton, NJ

Katherine Kurkjian – Verona, PA

- \* Noemi Megerian Bayside, NY
- \* Harold Nahigian La Cañada Flintridge, CA

**Aram Tomasian** – Belmont, NY

\* Memorials designated for AMAA



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